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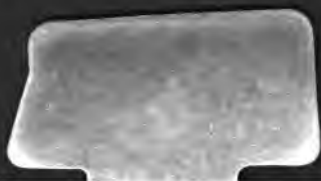
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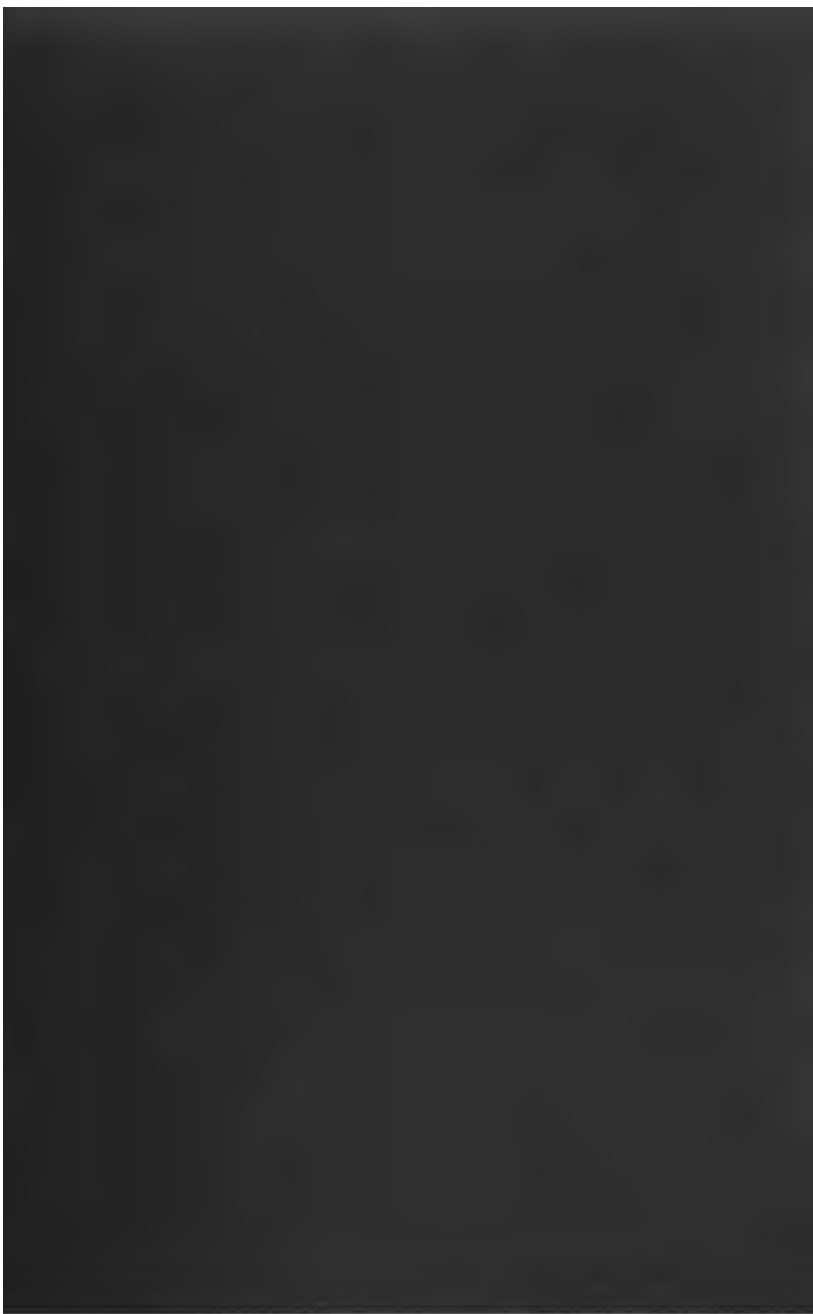
A GIFT
FOR ALL SEASONS.





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OUR
LEGENDS AND LIVES.

A Gift for all Seasons.

BY
ELEANORA LOUISA HERVEY.

— ♦ —
'VELOCES HORÆ.'



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1869.

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THIS BOOK
DESIGNED AS A GIFT FOR ALL
IS HERE
MORE ESPECIALLY OFFERED
TO A SON
BY HIS MOTHER.



PREFACE.

I HAVE so often been applied to for permission to insert in volumes comprising selections from the poetry of the century poems which I have contributed to the leading periodicals—several of such poems having, moreover, been pirated to include among the contents of Christmas gift-books—that I have thought it well here to collect a few of these, so as to form, with the addition of some new lyrics and legends, a gift-book suitable for all seasons.

For the power to reprint, kindly afforded me, my best acknowledgments are due to the proprietors of the ‘Athenæum,’ ‘All the Year Round,’ ‘Once a Week,’ ‘Chambers’s Journal,’ ‘The Quiver,’ ‘The Illustrated London News,’ ‘The Churchman’s Family Magazine,’ and ‘London Society.’

ELEANORA LOUISA HERVEY.

4, ST. AUGUSTINE’S ROAD,
WEST CLIFF, RAMSGATE.



CONTENTS.



MAY FLOWERS AND THORNS.	PAGE
The Duke's Answer	3
The Spirit of May	10
The Flower and Thorn	12
Larthon of Inis-Huna. A Legend of the Green Children	16
The Elfin May	23
The Youth's May Dream	26
The Bride of Rozelle A Legend of Jersey	29
Bring Home the May	33
Under a Thorn. <i>From the French of Boileau</i>	35
 A HARVEST SHEAF.	
Lear's Fool. Fiction and Fact	39
A Dream of Harvest	46
The Feast of Almhuin. A Legend of Ireland	49
Rizpah	54
The Vision of St. Walthen	56
The Gleaner's Guide	59
The Saxon Brothers. A Record of St. Augustine's Feast	62
Song of the Rising Lark	68
 SEASIDE LIFE AND LEGEND.	
A Strange Courtship	73
The Raft	82

SEASIDE LIFE AND LEGEND (<i>continued</i>).	PAGE
Homeward Bound	85
Rudiger and Ufelia. A Record of East Anglia	87
Two Seas	96
The Singer of the Sea. A Legend of the Orkneys	99
Upon a Cliff	104
The Huntress of Armorica. A Legend of St. Michael's Mount	106
Otlauga	114
A CHRISTMAS WREATH.	
The Christmas Rose	119
Christmas Night Music	127
The Waits	129
The Inspiration of Caedmon. A Record of our First Anglo-Saxon Poet	132
A Christmas Dream	136
A Christmas Carol	140
Malcolm and Margaret. A Record of Senlac	144
The Christmas Tree	152
The Coming of Christ	155
THE NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.	
The Loop of Pearls	159
Hymn to the New Year	167
The Gift of Clunnog Vawr. A Tale of Caer Arvon	169
The Spirit Child. A Bridegroom's Tale of the New Year	174
Thunnor's Slip. A Legend of Thanet	182
The New Year's Birth	189
RELICS OF BISHOP VALENTINE.	
The First Foot	193
The Black Shepherd. A Fairy Extravaganza	195
A Spenserian Wooper	201
The Carrier Dove	205

CONTENTS.

ix

A MEDLEY.	PAGE
A Prisoner's Prayer	211
After the Meteors	213
Alfred the Great teaching the Anglo-Saxon Youth	214
Hans Euler. <i>From the German of J. G. Seidl.</i>	216
The Silent Prayer	219
Ancient Clan Dirge	221
So far Away. <i>For Music</i>	222
Griselda	223
The Strayed Hound	225
Child-Led	227
Tyranny	229
The World of Love	232
The Highland Lover	234
Where the Roses Climb	236
The Woodland Flower	238
'Veloces Horæ'	242
The Grave of Mercy	243
Bathilda	245
The Spirit's Enigma	248
Birdalane	250
Sun-Rays	251
Haunting Spirits	252
The Caged Lark	254
The Golden Boat	256
Poor Heart, be Still. <i>For Music</i>	259
Sea, Earth, and Heaven	260
The Unknown Pleader	263
Victory : Alma	269
The True Amazon	271
After the Battle : Inkermann	273
The Return of the Guards	275
The Anniversary of Inkermann	277
The Massacre at Cawnpore	279
Saved from the Mutiny	281
The Patriot's Last Song	283
The Spirit of Youth	285
Drowned Hope	288

A MEDLEY <i>continued</i> .	PAGE
Tears	289
The Mother's Song of the Robin. <i>Scotch Air</i>	290
My Buckler	291
Weep Not, Grieve Not. <i>Air : Beethoven</i>	292
The Upland Path	293
A BLANK LEAF	



MAY FLOWERS AND THORNS.



May Flowers and Thorns.

THE DUKE'S ANSWER.

THE Lady Bertha had a game to play.
Though born of gentle blood, the maid was poor
In all, alas ! that gilds poor virtue's crown.
A worldly matron aunt, and the sharp round
Of three full London seasons, did their best
To cultivate her taste for strawberry leaves.
What flower might burgeon, or what fruit might set
Within the coronal that clips the brow
Was as a thought uncared-for and undreamed,
By all save Bertha ; and she hushed it down
Deep in the darkness of her troubled heart.
The duke was old ; and youth is youth ; and love
Must find its equal in all things—or die.

Badly the Lady Bertha played her game ;
And yet she won. As dicers, reckless grown,
Set the dice reeling, and then start to find
The winning figure uppermost at last
Denied to all their steady-measured throws.
The game was won. The duke was at her feet.

Did triumph move her, with a regal air
To bid him rise and take the conqueror's meed ?
Or did she dally with her prize, and make
Sweet favour sweeter as more hard to win ?

Neither. She silent stood and looked aghast
As one who sees the spectre of her fear
Rather than living substance of her hope.
She reddened upward to the marble brow
As though her purpose flew upon her face
And struck her suddenly with one quick blow
To shame her in her youth and maidenhood.

Her better impulse was to say him nay.
Then came the swift, strong trouble of the world,
And all that world would say : its jeer—its laugh,
Its ' Ah, poor thing ! she sentimental grew :
You heard—you saw—she jilted the old duke :
She thought, perchance, upon that poor lieutenant
Who wooed her all his life, from boy to man ;
Who, as he should do, slipped aside and let
The rich duke take his place. Thank you—some i
The air is heavy ; hark ! the waltz begins.'

The gentle blood in my lord duke perceived
The shadow of constraint on that flushed brow ;
And gave her time.

So she, once more alone,
Stood tracing wave-like circles in the air
That seemed to course about a ship at sea,
Till the room reeled around her. All she felt
Was sudden respite, mercifully sent

As unto one whose eyes the glimmering axe
Has dazzled like to a departing sun
Which looks its last upon a world of joy.
'Twas respite ; but not riddance. All she knew
Was that her answer would be looked for when
Red-branded autumn burned upon the woods ;
When the strayed-berries tangled in her path,*
And the wild equinox brought back to land
The ship ' True Heart.'

At that her heart made pause,
And all her thoughts grew tangled as the ways
In moody autumn when the weeds run wild.
What was that ship to her ?

It once was well
Through dull long nights to dream about the ship,
And through pale visions watch the tiger-leap
Of hungry waves that broke about her prow :
To list in waking fancy to the strain
Of groaning timbers, as the parted hulk
Let in grim death along the bounding swell
That upward sprang and rode the heaving deck ;
Then start, and shriek, and crave for morn to break
The shuddering horrors of the darkened deep.

'Twas other now. Her end, long sought, was gained.
The strawberry leaves were straying to her feet.
A little weaving of the web of wiles,
A little twisting of the threads of fate,—
And then the garland for the duchess' brow !

* Strayed, strewed, or strawed-berries.—Anglo-Saxon.

The gracious year was rounding to its close.
The curl of the eternal serpent grew
Almost a ring of days. Before the gale
Autumn let drop her burthen of the boughs.
Along the tangled paths the strayed leaves trailed ;
And by the high-swelled margin of the brook
The dying season lay with hair all loose,
Grassing the waters.

Gales sped back the ship ;
The ship ' True Heart ' brought Horace Vernon home.
Nay, more—such tricks will fickle fortune play—
To-night he comes ; to-night, too, comes the duke :
Horace to end that broken game at chess
Left but half-played the day he sailed to sea,—
(Bertha had kept the board untouched till now !)
The duke to take his answer, and bear home
A bride, or leave a heartless jilt in scorn.

The two were seated by the Indian board.
Her white hand slid an easy pawn aside,
And captured Horace's chief man at arms.
He took reprisal through the breach thus left,
Seizing her bishop by the bi-forked crown.
She stood rebuked. 'Twas a strange oversight.
Were her thoughts wandering ? *He* was all himself,
As ripe for battle as when rooted fast
Upon the ' True Heart's ' deck, 'mid battering guns,
He won that wound that crippled his best arm.
She would do battle, too. So, now more 'ware,
She (gazing meanwhile on his rest-slung arm)
Careered her knight into her foe's strong hold.
A move or two, and all the game was hers.

His one hand seemed to combat ill 'gainst two.
Or, were his thoughts, too, wandering ?—At that
She paused again, and fell in musing mood.

Soon, all the present melted from her view,
Save but the chequered board, of dark and light
By turns, as were her hopes of rescue near,
And one poor, broken, standard-bearing pawn.
The silent board became alive with dreams.
The serried line of battle, moving on,
Was closing round one small devoted band.
The captain of that band—a wounded man—
Lifting his bright face loyal to the last,
Held fast a banner in his unsmit hand,
And gallantly went down to death. His corse
Lay trampled ; and his red-robed freres, dismayed,
Gave way. Anon, a black funereal band,
Priest-headed, came and bore the dead to dust.
Kings followed, mourning ; and one queenly form
Wearing a crown upon her shame-flushed brow,
Stood bowed above the red grave of the man
Who died so loveless—yet with love so near !

The board grew dim. Her streaming tears flowed fast,
Betraying all her heart. She rose, and turned,
And would have hid her anguish from his sight.
But he had watched her, moved as she was moved,
By fears of lonely life and loveless death
For her who sat so silent, facing him
With the wan aspect of a soul all lost
That wanders wide of heaven for its sins.
Thus as she stood, forbearing now no more


To call her back from that distempered dream
Which filled her eyes with waters of dismay,
He breathed an old ancestral name ; a name
Not hers, but of a warrior maid who bore
Her father's crest in many a holy war ;
A name she ever bore in those old days
Of infant courtship, lisped beside the brook.

The dear old name ! So childlike sweet of old !
The martial beauty of it struck her home
As with a sense of high and strong resolve
Hid in her nature, waiting but the call
Of some true soul to rouse it into act.
So, making one brief struggle of weak shame
At thought of that poor dukedom and its duke,
She lifted up her sudden eyes to his.

An instant movement drew her to his side ;
And to his shoulder fell her drooping head,
Like a rath snowdrop.

But the while she leaned,
Safe as a plumeless bird in nested brake,
The air filled full with life—and spring come back—
And all the winter wandered from the world,—
Came ushered footsteps up the soundless stair ;
And in the open doorway, lo—the duke !

What need we more ? The better game was played.
Her early error wept for and atoned,
The Lady Bertha proved a loyal wife.
Her feet, love-guided to the nobler path,
Trod firm, and no more walked the slippery ways
Of worldlings. Still she dreamed ; but dreamed no more



Of gilded coronals. Her heart had found
Its rest—it may be on a troubled wave
Angels alone can smoothe with halcyon wing.
But when the noisy traffic of the world
Jarred on her sense, and all its poor vain pomp
Rolled past her as a cloud, her soul was far,
Far on the great wide waters with the brave.



THE SPIRIT OF MAY.

“Ach, Sohn! was hält sie zurück?”

“Siehe, Mutter, das sind die Trannen.”

MUTTERTRÄNNEN.

O LAGGING, backward May,
What aileth thee that thou dost drag so slowly?
Hath Winter craved thee with a grief unholy;
Like her who, legends say,
Wept for the child
Whose spirit mild
Strove up the angel-way?

O lovely legend old!
O tender spirit-child, that could not mount
The heavenly star-way on that sweet account!
Thus still its soft cry rolled:—
“Heaven’s pathway dims;
These dragging limbs
My tear-wet garments hold.”

Winter shall weep no more.
Rise, thou, unfettered, from the grave of flowers!
Thy poor world-mother hath spent all her showers.
The time of tears is o’er.
To stay thy feet,
Earth’s pulse shall beat
No longer, spirit-sore.

Arise, and walk in light !
No mortal chain shall bind thee where thou goest.
Into the very heart of love thou flowest
As with a soul-delight.
Life's thorny tree
Grows young in thee,
And blossoms in thy sight.

When spring and thou must fleet,
Thou shalt be mourned not as we mourn the dead.
We'll think of thee as of the young leaves shed
Of roses, memory-sweet,
That stayed awhile
To flush and smile
Under our fainting feet.

And, last, on God's blest morrow,
Our souls shall find thee midst those radiant ways
Where Love falls never upon wintry days,
And age new heart doth borrow ;
Where not a sob
Thy peace shall rob,
And not an angel-sorrow.



THE FLOWER AND THORN.

I. THE FLOWER.

I HEARD a young maid saying—"Sweet is the time of
 Maying,
 Pleasant the odours playing along the bended grass,
 When we catch the under-toning of the tender cushat's
 moaning,
 And the mountain winds salute us, kissing as they
 pass.

"O! lovely is the viewing of the ruddy morning's
 wooing,
 When from out the cloudlands stealing like a startled
 fawn she goeth,
 Leaving grey night complaining in the path of her dis-
 daining,
 Soft dews his soul revealing, that still follow where she
 goeth.

"And beautiful to mark ere the dazzled earth grows
 dark,
 The conquered sun down-dying on the crimsoned fields
 of day,
 Like a youthful warrior fighting for the land of his de-
 lighting,
 While the evening gales go sobbing through the blos-
 soms of the May."

Thus, while the May-bloom seeking, I heard her gentle
speaking,
And it thrilled me with the memories of a spring-time
long ago,
When with the thorn-boughs laden I met another
maiden
Whose passing from the green earth left me wintered
in the snow.

So she fled, like the seeming of that early youth-time's
dreaming,
A vision of deep beauty to still the soul of care ;
And long after she had parted, and left me newer-hearted,
I heard her bird-voice echoing on the rapt, impassioned
air.

O ! wild, untutored singing, music of Love's own ringing,
'Twas like a wind-harp sounding, murmuring as she
passed !
O ! tender May-spring flower, O ! life's delicious hour,
Touched by the golden dawning, wherefore away so
fast ?

II. THE THORN.

There went an aged man
Along the uplands, gathering the May,
The day was gracious as that first spring day
When tender Eve began
To feel it sweet to track the feet
That through the wild grass ran.

That time I heard him saying :—
“ Where is the May ? The dews have filled mine eyes.
The hills rise steeper than they used to rise
When with the flushed morn straying
She smiled to see how full of glee
A young heart went a-Maying.

“ The joys of life grow rare.
Where is the thrill of nature’s glory born,
With which of old I greeted each May morn ?
Departed !—where, oh ! where
The thoughts’ rich flood, the bounding blood—
The passion and the prayer ?

“ The springs of earth are failing.
The waning eve-star paleth in her place :
Ne’er did I see her with so wan a face
Along the welkin sailing !
The odours sweet faint round my feet :—
What is the old world ailing ?”

He ceased ; and laid him where
The broad tree-shadows danced as in a pool
Along a marge of light. While, calm and cool,
One other Presence there
Stole in and made eternal shade,
Shutting out sun and air.

When that ripe sire was born
He wailed to enter on a world so sad.
Yet now in quitting seemed it not so bad :
For though his flesh was torn,
I saw him smile to feel the while
His foot against the thorn !

Enough !—'tis idle playing.
Leave we the gathered sheaf among the flowers :
The key of Heaven's garner is not ours.
In truth there is no saying
What guardians keep, what pleasures steep
The tired soul gone a-Maying !



LARTHON OF INIS-HUNA.

A LEGEND OF THE GREEN CHILDREN.

THOSE isles of Scilly, basking by the shore
 Where Cornish mariners drag deep their nets,
 Are orphan isles. Their elder isles lie hid
 In graves, sea-watered ; lost to sight for aye,
 Till new and strange disruption of this earth,
 Heralded, haply, by the thunder's clash,
 Shall bid them heave once more their crested brows
 Above the flash and glimmer of the waves,
 To drink new sunlight and to breathe new air,
 And feel the stirrings in the heart of hills
 And hear the battle-music of wild boughs ;
 Bursting, as ambushed hosts from covert burst
 To clash of cymbals at the rouse of dawn
 With crested brows above the glimmering spears.
 Or, stealing silent from the parted deep,
 Green-visaged they shall rise—or seem to rise—
 With stealth-like motion gracious as the flow
 Of slow-retreating waves that leave them lorn
 To start the upper world with looks of light.
 Like those Wood-Children who upon a morn
 Of May, green-budded, stole as in a trance
 Out of the wolf-pits with a voice like bells
 In the green isle of Larthon on the sea ;
 Fair Inis-Huna, laurelled Inis-Huna,

The once fair isle of Larthon green by waves,
The green lost isle of Larthon on the sea.

In the rude days of conquest's thirst and rage
When Roman sickle clashed with Celtic scythe,
Dwelt Larthon on the Cassi's laurelled isle,
Green Inis-Huna, emerald of the sea :
That famed Silura which of old time drew
Hither the purple-robed Phœnician,
When native eyes, far looking from wild heights,
Saw first in fear and wondering wilderment
The track of that great trader's keel, as slow
It ploughed the ridgy pathway to these shores
Rich with the metall'd splendours of the mine.

The fierce war-spirit of the Bolga race
Swept through the blood of Larthon ; but the pulse
Of mercy beat there, too. And so it fell
That, when his blood was hot with battle's rage,
Two Roman children falling to his sword,
He hid them, living, from his soldiers' eyes
Deep in a wolf-pit ; and there covered them
With boughs of waving laurel, and there fed
Their lips with berries green, their souls with love,
Till the great shock of battle died with night.
But at the break of dawn, when to the pit
The conquering Larthon drew, the pit was filled—
Filled high with arms and corses. Glut of war
Had humed the babes even in their first sweet sleep,
And 'gainst the open door of life had raised
A piled-up tomb of the cold marble dead.

And Larthon wept a conqueror's tears—such tears

Are bitter waters unto good men's eyes !—
Wept o'er that fall of blossoms, snatched in haste
In slaughter's hour to perish in the hour
Of peace new-planted on the Cassi's shore.
But tears availed not them ; but only him
Who shed them. Mercy, true as tears, came back
After long time, like bread on waters cast,
To Larthon. Say it was a dream, no more ;
Yet dreams are fruitful, beautifully true
In some sweet sense, though men's weak eyes be dark
To read their truth aright.

Days rolled on days.

Larthon had won that fight. But, vaster grown
Years after with new legions drawn from Rome,
The strong defying power pressed Larthon hard.
He stood a conquered chief on Huna's isle,
A man without a land.

Upon a morn

Of May—as legends tell—when Roman power
Had pinned the British war-dogs to the earth
With Roman spears, at rest upon a mound
Of Inis-Huna, Larthon lay at length :
When, from the wild-dog pits, before his face,
Ascending, hand in hand, grown by degrees
Visible,—first by crown, then shoulder, limb,
And mounting foot—two children met his sight.
Fair were the two, but with a woodland shade,
A hue of green that o'er their features played,
Like the dank humid marsh-growth that has mossed
Fair marble forms in weed-rank gardens lying
Prone mid the damps, down-broken from their plinths.

Each outward hand, not clasped in other, bore
A laurel bough, that bendful waved and wide,
Fanning still air to movement. So they rose,
And—standing some way off, yet near to sound,—
Mingling sweet voices in harmonious breath,
Speaking as one, yet with a twofold love,
Hushed down the silence into Larthon's soul.

“From the green Underland,” they said, “we come
Once more to Larthon. Spears nor pierce us now,
Nor hands the death-grip tightening, crush our brows;
Nor writhing corpses struggling 'neath the press
Of piled-up slaughter smother our weak sighs.
Our happy days in the green Underland
We pass—a forest land of leaf-delights,
Thanks, thanks to Larthon!”

And the welkin rang
With “Thanks to Larthon!”

“Thanks to him who strewed
Green boughs above our sepulchre, ere we knew
It was our sepulchre; strewed the laurel green,
Never unleafed; the bough that Mercy wears
For crown, and men to mock the conqueror twines
For coronal of battle. List, O Larthon!
Pitiful Larthon, tenderest to babes,
Tender to women, needing tenderness,
Ruthful in battle, fierce but when assailed
In the dear places of the home-bound hearth,
And full of tears in conquest! List, O Larthon!
Seek thou yon Island of the West. To Rome,

Rome and her legions, leave this isle of beauty :
Leave it to spoiler's rage and victor's greed.
Soon shall the waters of the Cornish main
Know it no more : soon shall its laurel-boughs
Wave, a sea-forest, till the seas grow green
With the leaf-kissing,—green to the margin lips,
Like sea-maids prone on a weed-tangled crest
Of billows where the shore-waves suck the beach.
Go ! bear these green boughs to Iverna's Isle
And set them on a crown of hills, where soars
The black stork tarnward ; and so, year by year,
Renew in leaf-slips over all the isle
These boughs of Inis-Huna, green by sea.
And bear the wine-tree with the wine-tree corn"—

For—strange ! the phantoms, though of Roman race,
And Rome's by birthright, spoke the Celtic tongue,
And lipped the Cymbrian phrases to the life !

“ And bear the wine-tree and the wine-tree corn,—
Grain beautiful to sight and sweet to taste,
Pressed in its fulness as the year grows full ;
Sweet as the fruit of Avallonia's vale,
Where rolls the aval from the aval tree—*
Till all the West shall smile as one bright gem
Like this of Huna, green upon the marge
Of waters. So shall Memory hold through time
Fruitful for ever to the minds of men,
Fresh as the dew upon the laurel-bough,
The deed of mercy, Larthon, wrought by thee !”
Faded the music down ; faded the forms,

* Apple.

Airy as mists on the young brow of morn :
Voices, and words, and tremulous sweet records,
And tender whispers, grateful even to sighs,
Melted and faded from the soul-rapt sense.
Only remained the fadeless, verdant boughs—
Only the green boughs, greener for his tears :—
For once more Larthon wept for each fair child
Hidden by stealth in battle's brunt far down
Within the wolf-pit's mouth that swallowed more
That battle-day long past than would have filled
Full fifty graves of dead men laid apart :—
But these no more were waving on the breeze,
But lay at Larthon's feet, fresh as when first
He strewed them o'er the white of fear-white brows
Which sweet betraying beauty marked for spoil,
Safe now from slavery housed in a green grave
Below the wild-dog's pit.

And Larthon took
The heaven-sent gifts ; and oared a ship, and sailed
With the scant remnant of his conquered band,
Even to that blank Island of the West.
And in the land of his directed choice
Came happy days to Larthon ; rule and power
And leadership that well his soul had loved,
Used to good ends—such as rude times allowed.
And there he planted of the laurel-boughs
A waving grove—nay, myriad groves on groves,
For well they thrive on Erin's virgin soil,
Barren and wasteland all save where o'er-rid
By wanderers fleeing from his warlike race.
That Isle has many names ; but each records

Alike the Gaul—even thine, sweet “Inis-Fail !”
And though with Cairbar and with Cathmore died
The last of Larthon’s race, through history’s page
In Artho’s name the name of Larthon lives ;
And, shrined amid the seas, where waving boughs
Crown children with the laurel light of love,
Erin’s Green Isle keeps Larthon’s memory green.



THE ELFIN MAY.

BORN in the purple meet for her,
 Proclaimed by hearts that beat for her,
 Throned on the mosses green ;
 Scattering from our souls the snow
 With memories of long ago,
 She comes—the Elfin Queen !

A thousand fancies glance to her ;
 The village children dance to her
 With smiles that come and part ;
 Their pealing voices tell of her,
 Till nature feels the spell of her
 And lives along the heart.

Their russet robes she flings aside ;
 She pranks them with a queenly pride,
 Their brows with garlands wreathing :
 Like chords by wandering breezes thrilled,
 Their spirits are with music filled,
 Touched by her tender breathing.

With loving tones they speak to her ;
 They lift the dimpled cheek to her
 To kiss their tears away ;
 From arching boughs they bear her out,
 While sweet resounds the woodland shout—
 “ Bring home—bring home the May ! ”

O, fair is she at radiant noon,
Fairer beneath the freshening moon,
And beautiful always :
Bright tears she gives when blossoms die ;
Mid smiles she lives when Love is nigh—
A mortal, yet a Fay.

The south wind oft has sighed for her,
Sad April, weeping, died for her,
Disdaining other duty ;
Pale Hyacinth upon the gale
Droops, as she sweeps the charmèd vale,
Drowned in a dream of beauty.

Never a tendril born but blesses
Her with its twining fond caresses,
Mute-bending to her will :
Birds in her borrowed strains rejoice ;
The music of her low, sweet voice
Sounds in the mountain rill.

Threading like light the forest glade,
Now in, now out, the chestnut shade,
Or hid in woodland nooks,
The squirrel's haunt she mounteth up ;
Or, rocked in vain Narcissus' cup,
She bends above the brooks.

When, sly, her web Arachne weaves,
And spirits, stirring mid the leaves,
Take mortals unaware,
Where, eddying, whirl the water-rings,
Like Venus from the foam she springs—
The reed-bloom in her hair.

On buoyant wing, serene and strong,
She follows far the cuckoo's song,
 Still lost and ever flying ;
Till, lured along some rocky slope,
She finds at last a cheated hope
 In Echo's soft replying.

Her chosen tree the roebuck knows,
As, butting at its bole, he goes
 To cut his budding horns.
Both young and old shall bless the May ;
But she shall give the flowers away
 And dwell among the thorns.

Sorrow shall come to her full soon ;
For she shall love the haughty June,
 And wait—he never coming :
Or dream she hears at even-close
His voice, in murmurs to the rose,
 Blent with the wild-bee's humming.

When wheels the bat his giddy ring,
And, where the lithe cicadas sing,
 The chafer's wings are whirring ;
Where wild the fairy-grasses wave,
Proud June shall trample on her grave
 The leafy forest stirring.

Why then—farewell the blithesome Fay,
Farewell the beating pulse of May
 Whose charm the senses stole ;
And welcome o'er the grave of spring
The butterfly upon the wing—
 The glorious type of soul !

THE YOUTH'S MAY DREAM.

WITH buds and thorns about her brow,
 I met her in the woods of May
 Bending beneath a loaded bough.
 She seemed so young, and was so fair,
 A rosy freshness in her air
 Spoke morning gliding into day.

Wild as an untamed bird of spring
 She sported mid the forest ways
 Whose blossoms pale did round her cling.
 Blithe was she as the banks of June
 Where humming bees keep heartfelt tune :
 The soul of love was in her lays.

Her words fell soft upon mine ear
 Like dropping dew from leafy spray.
 She knew no shame ; she felt no fear.
 She told me how her childhood grew ;
 Her joys how keen—her cares how few.
 She smiled, and said her name was May.

May of my heart ! Oh, darling May !
 Thy form is with the shows that fleet.
 And I am weak, and worn, and gray.
 I see no more the things I loved :
 The paths wherein their beauty moved
 Do seem to fail beneath my feet.

I marked her for a little space :

And soon she seemed to heed me not ;
But gathered flowers before my face.

Oh ! sweet to me her untaught ways :

The love I bore her all my days

Was born of that wild, woodland spot.

I never called her bride nor wife.

I watched her bloom a little more,
And then she faded out of life.

She quaffed the wave I might not drink,

And I stood thirsting on the brink !—

Oh ! hurrying tide !—Oh ! dreary shore !

They knew not that my heart was torn.

They said a fever left me mad ;

And I had babbled of a thorn,

A withered May, and scattered bloom,

A well of tears, and wayside tomb—

Alas ! 'twas all the lore I had !

And to this day I am not clear :

My stricken mind doth grope its way

Like those who walk where woods are sere.

I cannot see to set apart

Two things so crushed into my heart

As May and Love—and Love and May !

Still, shouting 'neath the greenwood tree,

Glad children call upon her name.

But life and time are changed to me.

The grass is growing where she trod,

Above her head a bladeless sod—

The very earth is not the same.

Oh ! heavy years, grow swift and brief !
Death lay thy hand upon my brow !
I wither as a shrunk-up leaf.
I perished while my days were young :
The thoughts to which my spirit clung
Consumed me like a sapless bough.

And now, oh May ! my vanished May !
Our thorns are gathered one by one,
And all their bloom is borne away.
The corn is reaped, the sheaf is bound,
The Gleaner's foot is on the ground,
And pain is past—and life is done !



THE BRIDE OF ROZELLE.

A LEGEND OF JERSEY.

LAPPED in the Bay of Roses, flowered Rozelle,
 Roselle, the lady of the isle, reclined,—
 Bride of a summer,—facing the curved belt
 Of shore thick-strewed with gatherers of the vraic*
 Among the blackened rocklets, whence the maids
 And youths of Augia shear the drift-borne weed.
 Humbert, her lord, was off to hunt the beast,
 A dragon fell that lurked in wild Gooray.
 Companioned but by one, bold Humbert went.
 Kind heaven grant that in the world's rough ways
 Companioned so we never may set out !

Those strange old Augian roads are mazes all ;
 Now mounting up to where an ivied rock
 Shows like a ruined fort, now deeped in dells
 Of long-belled heath, broad fern, blue water-cup,
 Citronous vervain, and the East-born fig.

Humbert went humming a rude Northern lay,
 Of Thor and Balder, to the heartened winds.
 But a low under-soul of sweeter song
 Through all the strain thrilled like a breeze-touched chord ;
 For through those winding shades he wooed Roselle.

Was it a mist of tears swept o'er his eyes ?
 What should he know of tears, who never shed ?
 Was it a mist from out of the valleys borne ?—

* Seaweed.

The thought passed swiftly, like a drowner's thought
Of grass-green fields. Then a great flashing light
Shot in and out the chambers of his brain,
And thought was at an end. A brave white face
Was down among the ivies ; and the fronds
Of the broad ferns were spotted thick with blood,
Bearing the seed of misery on the leaf.

A stir is in the courts of flowered Rozelle.
The vrac may gather on the troubled seas
And hang its funeral banners on the rocks ;
The youths and maidens stand with lifted palms
That drop the idle sickle in the sands.
So swift a bridal, ere her lord's dead corse
Has time to stiffen in the winds of night !
Is fealty stricken, or has truth gone mad ?

She turned her from the altar where she stood.
She snatched her pledged hand from her new-made lord ;
And, sounding a low bugle, brought within
The chapel, whence the priest was passing out,
A band of her own people. Then she spoke.

“ Ye see this man who woos me—whom I wed.
Ye know, too, why I wed him. From my lord,
My dead, dead lord, oh God ! came swift command.
It was—so says this man—his dying will,
Confirmed by warrant of this ring he sent,
That I should wed his friend, my lover once,
This creature of his trust, who saw him fall
A prey to the dread monster, yet could wend
His smooth way home to claim a soulless bride.
My lord's dear will—if will it be—is done.

Here at the altar have I pledged my hand
With all the wealth that lies within this isle
Free to my giving. Ye, too, all are his.
Keep a good guard on him :—nay, watch him well ;
Your service is to him. You mark my words ?
Be still about him, so he move no inch
Without your duteous service : do ye hear ?
For me, my duty all lies elsewhere,
To find my lord on earth—or else in heaven.
I go not lonely ; see, here in my breast
I bear the bird he loved, his message-dove.
If that the bird comes back, then lives your prince,
Though traitorous hands have plotted 'gainst his life.
If the bird comes not back, then all is lost
Save that great after-love which lives not here,
For I go with him to the Silent Shore."

Adown the green slopes took the bride her way.
No monster feared she save the monster Hrolf
She left full-guarded by her Humbert's band.
Lit by the light of her great love she went,
Pure instinct guiding all her angel steps ;
As angels, blind, could find their way to heaven
Though all the cruel forces of this world
Had tricked the mazes of its wildering paths.
Through all the circling windings of the dells,
By all the margins of the belted streams,
Now diving deep in caves of hollow shores,
Now struggling upward the green-mantled hills,
She searched the land, his bird within her breast ;
And, to make sure her lost way back to peace,
Kept dropping sweet prayers all the way she went.

Along a ladder of bare-rooted trees
Far down a tangled dingle, near a cell
By some lone hermit wattled of green twigs,
She threaded a wild labyrinth of boughs ;
And leaving winter in the world behind,
Found a great soul of summer in the glade.

Deep by the green bed of a rush-grown pool,
Backed by the pillar of a spreading thorn,
Prince Humbert leaned, glad life within his eyes.

Forgetting all things in her new-found joy,
She seized a Maythorn bough, and swung to land
Out of the flooding river of her grief,
Low-lighting on her knees at those dear feet.
Till, spreading wide her arms to clasp him round,
Quick from her breast the captive bird outflew !

In eddying circles rose the bird on high,
Till the near touch of heaven brought thoughts of home ;
Then with God's great sign-warrant cleaved the skies.

Away upon the wild winds winged the bird,
But not along the blue fields lonely went ;
For loyal vengeance beat her equal wings,
Outstripping tardy justice in her flight ;
And ere the tides ran back to tell the sea
The messenger of death had winged to shore,
Black Hrolf, the target of Prince Humbert's band,
Writhed with a sheaf of arrows in his breast.

BRING HOME THE MAY.

‘BRING home the May!’

So joy, of childhood born,
Goes wandering on some breezy morn
Singing glad songs amid the unmown hay,
And sweeter still at even-fall
Repeats, like echo’s call,—
‘Bring home the May!’

‘Bring home the May!’

So love, that springs from youth,
Sunned in the quenchless light of truth,
Wrapped in the splendour of its golden day
Sings down the far-off voice of care ;
And, wreathed amid his hair,
Brings home the May.

Bring home the May !

Joy rests in wedded homes,
And love no more the wild wood roams ;
Sweet links of thought the restless footsteps stay ;
While memory, the child of Time,
Full in the flushing prime
Brings home the May !

Bring home the May !

Dearer and holier still
That music to the heart shall thrill
And through the glories of the springtide play,

Round hearths where children's voices meet,
And, gathering sweet to sweet,
Bring home the May !

Bring home the May !
Though with its low-run sand
The hour-glass shake within the hand,
And life should pause within the breathing clay :
Yet, while the tide of time shall roll,
Still, to the living soul,
Bring home the May !

Bring home the May !
For ever and for ever.
Banish the gracious symbol never :
Cast not the freshness of the heart away !
Till human from Divine shall sever,
For ever—still for ever
Bring home the May !



UNDER A THORN.

From the French of Boileau.

BEHOLD the paths where first I dreamed !
'Twas here, her form while fancy drew,
The tranquil hours so sweetly flew.—
How well I loved ! How fair she seemed !
Her name, my heart, thy sighs are breathing o'er :
Hast thou forgotten that thou lov'st no more ?

The sun upon these meadows gleamed,
Whose rarest flowers I culled and bore ;
The flowers she once, delighted, wore.—
How well I loved ! How fair she seemed !
Her name, my heart, thy sighs are breathing o'er :
Hast thou forgotten that thou lov'st no more ?





A HARVEST SHEAF.



A Harvest Sheaf.

LEAR'S FOOL.

FICTION AND FACT.

Two women, nobly nurtured, sister-twins
In beauty such as might have won the prize
Of Paris from the world, lost Actium
For other Anthonys, or burnt new Troys,
Met to take counsel of the closing day.
One, half reclined upon a crimson couch :
Her cheek supported by her dimpled hand ;
Her finger bound by that encircling hoop
Which either stamps its impress deep for life,
Or loosely from the care-worn finger slips.
The other rested firm with elbow laid
Composed upon a marble chimney slab.
On her down-drooping finger life had laid
No burthen yet. She was the first to speak.
“ We watched the last great loaded wain go by—
Harry and I—across the stubbles. Then,
I heard you were alone ; and so I came.”
“ Am I not ever thus ? More lonely still
When he is here than when he stays away.

I might as well be barred within a cage,
And twitter on a turf four inches square
While all the bright-plumed creatures of the earth
Lent the glad hours their wings, as live cooped up
In this old mouldy prison of a house,
Here in the farthest suburb on the map,
From morn till night, with no one but—”

“ A mate.”

“ A nothing—a mere book-worm, only born
To feed upon a bundle of dry leaves.”

“ I grieve that you should find the hours so dull :
The more because I urged you to this course.
Indeed I thought you needed but the link
Of shared delights free from the busy crowd :
The books together read ; your harp, his voice ;
Or quiet converse flecked with sparkling wit.
You ne’er are wanting in a ready word :
'Tis strange he is so dull as not to strike
The sparks of fancy——”

“ At the fancy ball
We did exchange a few smart repartees.
You know he was old Lear, and I the Fool.”

“ Cannot you play the Fool at home ?”

“ I did

Once try ; but it was dreary, dreary work.
I called him Nuncle. But he said the word
Had a sad sound for him. I asked him why.
He answered that a lovely girl he knew
Often performed that part to royal Lear :

That there was something—but he faltered there,
And said his work awaited him ; his books
Must all be got through for the next Review,
And thoughts of trouble hindered his free mind.”

“ You helped him with his reading ? read the least
Important of the volumes, while he took
In hand the works on subjects more profound ?”

“ I never thought to do so. Is it right
For any one but him to read and judge ?”

“ Why, there you show a conscience keen as his.
Well, no ; you’re right. He could not leave the task
Alone to such a novice as my Anne ;
Yet something you might help, if but to guide
His choice in singling out the worthiest—
But what is here ? Why, what a choice bouquet !”

“ Yes ; Herbert sent it. But what card is that ?
In turning round the flowers, see ! you have dropped
A loose card dangling by a scrawl of string.”

“ It bears a brief direction—‘ Miss Latour,
Great Titchfield Street.’ ”

“ The actress ?”

“ So it seems.”

“ Tied to the flowers !”

“ Why do you pale and shake ?”

“ The flowers—the flowers were never meant for me !”

“ Well, what is there in that ? The gift is good
Let it be given to whomsoe’er it may.
What horror speaks in your wide eyes ?”

“ The name—

The name !—This woman must be Shakespeare's Fool !”

“ Beware—beware, lest fiction's fools are fooled

By those of fact! You lose your self-command.

Pardon,—I am disturbed to see you thus.

The light has faded from your golden hair ;

Your lips are livid. Pray, oh pray rely——”

“ This is the name he could not speak to me ;—

That choked his voice—that troubled all his thoughts.

I am betrayed—betrayed ! Take, take those flowers

And shed their hateful blossoms on the wind !

The rose of all my life is crushed and dead

Since Herbert is untrue !”

“ One word——”

“ Not one !”

“ There must be some mistake.”

“ There is, there is !

That half-wit boy his charity supports,

Whom many a time I've urged him to dismiss,

Has all mistook his errand. That address,

Tied to the blossoms, should have borne them winged

With love—to Miss Latour !”

“ 'Tis strange ; unlike

The man I've known so many a noble year.”

“ You knew him ne'er till now !”

“ Judge him not yet,

And on such evidence—too slight, too weak

To weigh against the verdict of a world

Which honours him as one in whom no fault,

Even such as in that world is lightly held,
Has ever marred the whiteness of his life.
What if I judged you as you judge of him ?
What if I said you lacked in charity
In begging him dismiss that half-wit boy
Who earns the crust his bed-ridden mother needs
By toilsome gleaning on our harvest fields.
Why now you flush with anger. Did he so,
When you bore hard upon the orphan ?—Anne !
I do believe in my most hopeful heart
No thought of his has wronged you. I have known
This poor Emile Latour. The girl is one
Devoted to a crippled father's care ;
Of life most spotless ; beautiful as day.
Why start ! If true there's beauty in her face,
The more unwise to mar your own with frowns.
The flowers, if meant for her—but 'tis not sure—
Must have been sent to cheer the cripple's room.
Or, say they were for her ; well, what of that ?—
Quick ! pluck the thorn of doubt from off your cheek,
See, here he comes."

"What ! you here, Bell ?—So, Anne,
You got your flowers, I see. Why, here's the card
I sent to Miss Latour !—That idiot boy !
Well, 'tis no matter : she has learnt ere this
By other signs agreed on, that the coast
Is clear for flight. By this time she's on board—
You stare. The secret's out. Sweet cousin Bell,
And you, my little wife, draw nearer :—so.
Now listen while I tell a pleasant tale
Of Lear's poor Fool.

You've heard of Miss Latour ?

You knew her the best daughter in the world.
Few knew she was a wife. Half for the sake
Of her old crippled father ; half in fear
Of such temptations as her calling threw
Still ever in her way ; she gave her hand
To a mere shifter of the playhouse scenes.
The man turned out a drunkard and a brute,
And was dismissed for wardrobe pilfering.
Haunting the theatre but to seize her gains,
He beat and bruised her in her humble home.
She bore up bravely—till a child was born.
Then would this shame of manhood take the child
From out the mother's arms, and swear to part
The treasure from her breast, unless—unless—
In short, unless she found him larger sums
To satisfy his vicious drunken greed.
Friends helped her : gave large sums. And day by day
So bought the mother back her bosom's child !
This could not last. The actors took it up.
And one—all honour to his noble name !—
Poor fellow ! he went down amid the seas
Before his cup of sweet humanity
Was full. Well, I must close my tale in haste.
Her father's dead ; and she is safe beyond
The wretch's power : sails for America
With the first breeze to-morrow. There she owns
A brother will be guardian to her child
And her.—My Anne, you're weeping."

" Mind not me.

'Tis not the tale : 'tis that strong heliotrope
That makes me faint."

“Why, what a fool was I
To choose so badly when I bought the gift !
In all the lore of flowers that seek the sun,
I am as ignorant as an owl. What, you too, Bell !”

“That’s the verbena ! ’Tis a pungent plant.
’T would prick the tears out of a core of flint.”

“Nay, never mask your tenderness. I see
The tale has touched you—could almost believe
That something even deeper than the tale——”

“Good cousin Herbert, search us not too closely.
Our thoughts are sometimes contraband of war :—
A little smuggling, too, we do besides.
Yet ’tis not in your Articles of War,
Nor in your Customs’ duties noted down,
That you should cry, with every change of mood,
“Stand and deliver !” like a highwayman.
Our women’s hearts are riddles to you gods.
We’ve been a little foolish, both of us.—
Our errors lie in our poor fledgeless souls
That shiver in their nests before their wings
Have cast the down.—Ay, take her to your breast.—
I leave you to your golden wedding, Anne :
For golden breaks the sun your passing cloud.
Be sure he’ll give you work enough to do.
She wants to meddle, Herbert, with your books.
But now farewell : one waits for me at home.
To-morrow I shall be my Harry’s bride.
Till then, to-morrow, farewell to you both !”

A DREAM OF HARVEST.

I DREAMED it was the harvest time : I dreamed—oh !
 wild and vain,
 It was the golden harvest time, and thou wert come
 again ;
 Come from thy far-off Indian grave beyond the cruel
 main.

This hand in hand of thine was clasped, as never, never
 more !
 God's sun upon the threshold burned, as mute we crossed
 it o'er :
 The lusty reapers lay athirst, prone on the stubble floor.

Though drowsy noon was at his full, we heard no watch-
 dog's call ;
 For silent as a dream of love we passed amidst them
 all :
 We passed, it seemed, as spirits pass whose footsteps
 have no fall.

Like spirits, too, did we inhale the air of peace and
 faith :
 Of joy too deep for mortal speech we drew the living
 breath ;
 And proved the everlasting truth how Love can conquer
 Death.

The dreamer's soul is wisdom-born, and what it loves believes :

The teeming earth had not a grave ; there were no more crushed leaves ;

There was no winter in the world, as we leaned among the sheaves.

The parching ground no dew-drop bore, to bring back thoughts of tears ;

The tenderest breath love ever drew shook soft the golden ears,

That we in one full sheaf might glean the scattered hopes of years.

The mounting lark soared up for joy to other, higher goals :

We were content to drink the light—the light that earth-ward rolls ;

To stand amid the sheaves and feed the hunger of our souls.

The autumn shadows fell apace ; but we were in our June.

We tarried till the rustic pipe made music 'neath the moon :

Our hearts among the reapers danced—but to another tune.

We long outstayed the festive feet ; till not a sound fell near ;

A trance so full and deep was ours, that we might almost hear

Amid the raptured hush of night the grain drop from the ear.

We lingered ; till a riper glow the glowing sheaves did
take,

When warm o'er all the crested hills we saw the red
dawn break :

And, silent still, clasped hand to hand, we watched the
world awake !

My dream was done ; black night came back ; and back
came death and pain :

Hot tears that blotted heaven's face poured down like
autumn rain.—

Oh ! God, when in Thy harvest field shall we two stand
again !



THE FEAST OF ALMHUIN.

A LEGEND OF IRELAND.

*Bi an Carn do leact.**

GLANCING and keen the bright sun struck the sea,
Which rose beneath it like a silver shield
Guarding the fair young bosom of the land,
When Erragon, with all his princely crew,
Bore straight for Inisfail. The goodly prow
Of that strong ship that pranced them o'er the deep,
In likeness of a fiery-footed steed,
Flinging the chafed foam from its breeze-lashed sides,
Seemed champing at the bit.

More full of fret,
And chafing at the curb of his high will,
Came Erragon. For not to feast came he
To Fion's hall of Almuin by the shore,
Where on that day was held the Feast of Shells,
Rich with the fruited harvest of the year.
A storm of passion in his spirit leaped,
Like a high-crested wave, and would not lull,
But overbore him as a stranded hulk,
Lone at the mercy of the lashing sea.

As bore the ship to sandward, first was he
To plunge breast-high upon the shelving shore,
His polished arms aloft above his head.

* "May the Carn be thy bed."—*Celtic*. A more bitter malediction than this could not be uttered.

And ere his flower of warriors could disbark,
While yet his foot sole kissed the golden sands,
Adown the golden sands toward the sea
Along the pebbled flats in beauty rath
Came Fion's daughter like a new-slipped ray
From out the coronal of morn : white-robed,
And girdled with a wreath of amaranth flowers
Of crisp-scaled petal, purple-violet hued ;
Her shoulder-knots, two corded trefoil stems,
Twisted of green in many a winding knot,
With tripled leaves of the green beetle-shards
Upborne, like shining wings, upon the breeze.

Leading a hundred steeds, behind her came—
A hundred steeds all white as British steers—
A hundred warriors with strong-hided shields,
And spears, sky-pointed, drawing fire from heaven :
The steeds with broidered housings each adorned,
In hues of saffron gleaming like the sun.

A moment turned she on her lithe free foot,
Beholding Erragon ; and bade the chiefs
Who led the offering of the milk-white steeds
Make halt awhile : then, forward nobly urged,
Stood straight, and spoke the king.

“ To Erragon,

Great king of Lochlin, come I from the feast
Of Almuin. Fion's daughter I : the first
That ever crossed these sands to greet a foe
Or bore the whited wand of sluggish peace.
Nor had I come for safety of my kin :
Not brothers' blood had moved me ; no, nor sire's—

Since battle's work has been their milk from babes—
But to stay vengeance ere its cup be full,
For love of Evarallin."

At that name—

A name of honour once, now brand of shame,
A name of honour and a name of pride,
Ere Aldo, treacherous guest, had stolen away
The queen of Lochlin to the Fions' shore—
The king, forgetting face of fairest foe
And presence high and peace-entreating voice,
Stamped, sudden-fierce, the pebbled beach to dust.
But never word broke from him ; till the maid,
With herald-wanded hand raised white on high,
Made proffer of the goodly gifts she brought.

"A hundred milk-white steeds are thine—and more
So thou shalt smooth that ruffled front of war,
And lone in grief leave bowed-down Evarallin."

"A hundred curses light upon her head :
A hundred horses tear her limb from limb,
So ne'er I look upon her face again !"

"A hundred girdles of the amber beads,
Charmed against sickness, shall be thine—and more,
So that thou leave her beauty to its fall."

"A hundred serpents wind about her neck,
Till sickness wither her and blast that beauty
Which ruled me, son of Anir, to my cost !"

"A hundred beakers of the elk-horn brim
To set before the kings of all the world :
Whoso shall drink from these grows young for ever."

"A hundred poisoned beakers hold their drink
Who dare to harbour, knowing of my wrong,
Her, the detested one, within their halls!"

"The friendship of the Fions and of Fin—"

"The Fions shall be my captives; and for Fin,
With Fin will I do battle on the shore!"

"Me, as a hostage, shalt thou have—and more;
The daughters of my house to fill thy cup,
The brothers of my house to front thy wars,
So thou leave Evarallin to her woe,
Down in the dust her mad adventure weeping;
Weeping the ruin following on the fault,
Weeping the innocent blood out-poured for her,
Before the spilling,—knowing what must come.
An hostage I, in pledge that she return,
Sullied in name, but not in honour sullied:
To sit in Fion's hall at Almhuin's feast,
Safe to my arms she came; shall safe return:
Her error rued or ere she touched the shore."

Loud laughed the king: "Let Aldo answer it!
For Evarallin,—be the Carn her bed!"

Then, drawing his bare blade across his lips,
He vowed his vow of battle past recall:
"War to the death with Fion and with Fin!"

Like a tress-streaming comet, that has curved
Her errant path to let a star look through
Her beauty, and so tame his fiercer light,
Then back to Almhuin turned the Fion maid;
And down the battle rushed. And the long locks

Of Aldo floated in a sea of blood,
Tossed like the Red-Sea weeds when storms break o'er
The gulphy deeps of Araby. Low laid
With many a Fion hero on that day.
But Aldo was the spoil of Erragon,
Singled from seven score of Fion chiefs
To whet his thirst of slaughter.

Few returned
To wild Lochlin, of all the princely crew
Who rode that charger of the sea to land,
Where Erragon had met the herald-maid.
The challenged and the challengers alike
Peopled the field of carnage to the wave.

Eight days the battle raged. When dawned the ninth
Great Erragon lay low. On his brown shield
At peace he slept, nor dreamed of Evarallin :
Fair Evarallin, fairest at the feast
Of lordly Almhuin ; fair, but weak as fair,
And penitent as weak. Above the grave
Of Erragon she wandered like the wind
That, worn with raving, settles to a sigh.
For with the issue of that bloodful day
She maddened. And her wail went up to heaven
And fell, as rose and fell the waves : and still
Her cry was " Erragon, oh ! Erragon,
Most noble—faithful ;—Erragon, my lord,
Wherefore forbad'st thou me the Fion's feast ?—
Woe, woe to Aldo—and woe, woe to me
To list his serpent voice, forgetting thine,
Lochlin—my king—my love—my Erragon !"

RIZPAH.

“And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.”—
2 SAM. xxi, 10.

THE day of dread is in its noon ;
On heavy wing the vulture wheeling :
And, looming like a reddened moon,
The sun through fog is stealing ;
Where lies the flower of death's pale band,
Where famine's tooth has gnawed the land.

Silence is on the festering air
Above ; below a darkened city :
And not a soul dare move with prayer
The angry heavens to pity ;
For one dread horror masters all,
Save her whose hairs are grey for Saul.

Waving her arms on that dead wind
Whose pause of breath her cries are filling ;
In love with death ; in madness blind,
The wolf's loud hunger stilling ;
Alone on Gibeah's rock she stands,
Feeding the plague with her wild hands !

Angels shall mark, and, shuddering, flee
Those freezing orbs, all stiffly glazing,
That seem to mock at God's decree ;
Where, soulless, 'neath her gazing
Seven temples of the Lord, defaced,
Lie stark on Gibeah's stony waste.

Like blackened wheat on Salem's plains,
Her hope is in the green ear blighted :
Where, save her tears, heaven sends no rains,
The locust hath alighted,
To feed among her heart's torn leaves,
Battening among its garnered sheaves.

Lo ! from yon rock where crushed they lie,
Fierce pestilence even now is threading
Through homes of men who gasp and die,
Her way, like baal-fires spreading ;
Till at their founts the springs run dry,
And all is one great agony.

So life shall pine—and none to save,
Till, with the dawn of love's blest morrow,
By Araunah's floor shall wave
The avenger's sword of sorrow ;
And Judah's God turn back the brand,
And lift that scourge from off the land.



THE VISION OF ST. WALTHEN.

IN time of old, when song had fewer notes
 And breathed a rarer breath ; when tale and myth
 Lived cloistered lives ; and wonders walked the world
 Nor startled pious dreamers with their tread,
 The flower of legend bloomed and cast its seed.
 As on the giant mountain falls the snow,
 On a great faith a white simplicity
 Fell softly—like a crown ; and men believed.
 The skies wore other colour than they wear
 Since worship grew a form. From each vast pile
 The light from storied windows took the hues
 Of the field buds and blossoms : burning down
 On sward and seed-plot, the transfigured sun,
 Raying through discs of peony and rose,
 Quickened each germ within the sluggard earth.
 Even so the light—though coloured but by dreams,
 That rayed from Heaven on the hearts of men,
 Burst like a flower and fruited all the soul.

One stood before the altar, breaking bread ;
 The good St. Walthen ; even as Christ brake once,
 In full communion, for remembrance sake,
 In Godward Salem at the feast of souls.
 'Twas common bread ; such fruitage as the earth
 Yields to this day, grown from the self-same seeds
 Which poor men water with the sweat of brows,
 Asking God nothing save the leave to toil.

The breaker of the bread, with gazing long
On that he held devoutly 'twixt his palms,
Saw the bread heave and swell before his eyes
That ached with longing for some food divine
To nourish less his body than his soul.
And, longing thus, his thought took form and grew.

Within his grasp, no longer that white meal
Bruised from the husk and leavened into bread,
But a most living form of love divine
He held in wonder ! Yea, the bread was gone,
And in its place the infant Saviour lay,
And to his eyes looked smiling ! Struck with awe,
And deeming it not meet that mortal touch
Should bring defilement on a thing of Heaven,
The breaker of the bread, with hand unwise,
Laid the great soul-gift on the altar down.
'Twas reverently done : but God knew best,
Who chose his resting-place ; and would not brook
The gift he sent should so be set aside
Reject of man whom he, creating, loved.
No sooner was the God-gift laid apart
Than all the blessing and the wonder fled !
Blank on the altar lay man's common food,
The broken bread of beggars, all whose wealth
Is one poor crust !—And, O my God ! how poor
Are they who seeing but the earthly bread
And not the giver, gulp it thankless down,
Steeped in that draught wherein the world was drowned
Until He changed it to the blood of vines
Who gave us life's full vineyard and its fruit,
And bade us tread the wine-press with our feet,
Walking His ways and drinking of His cup.

O mystic legend—beautiful as pure !
That infant simpleness, sole born of Heaven,
Which makes divine the common bread we break
Grows with our daily prayers ! Dropped from the skies,
Within our lifted hands the child will breathe
If constantly we clasp it. Looking love
Even to our eyes ; supplying all our need,
Freshening our souls, and feeding us with smiles
Drawn from God's face, the gift of Heaven will live,
Not by our altars only but our hearths.
But should we for an instant lay it down
In our dull wisdom ; should we cast away
Through any strange deception of the heart
That white simplicity for ever young,
At once a child and God—O, all we hold
Is earth once more ; and never may we break
The bread of Heaven again !



THE GLEANER'S GUIDE.

"POOR heart! that twinest with the twisted band
Thoughts bound to sorrow, in a smiling land,
What dost thou here with tears upon thy hand?"

So spoke a reaper, standing 'mid the leaves,
Between the time of suns and golden eves,
To a lost maiden binding up the sheaves.

"In vain to heaven's face I lift mine eye;
On me no comfort droppeth from on high:
So shall I reap in sorrow till I die."

So cried the maiden, weeping as she bound;
Cheating glad echo with a thankless sound;
Her hot tears dropping—dropping on the ground.

"Leave the full sheaf: go, glean the scattered ears:
Stain not the precious bread of life with tears!—
Bruise not the blossom, tender as thy years!"

So spoke the reaper, on a balm-breathed morn,
To that wronged maiden, chided and forlorn,
Plucking the virgin bindweed from the corn.

"O Man—so seeming tender of the bud—
See! on the drooping poppy hast thou trod,
Crushing sweet sleep out,—even in tears of blood!"

So cried the maiden, goaded into pain,
On whose dead heart there fell no harvest rain;
A blossom bruised before the time of grain.

"Go forth!—thou comest to the field too late :
On thee, and on thy woe, I bar the gate.—
Away ! I will not have thee for my mate."

So spoke the reaper, as the night fell black,
To that poor gleaner on life's stony track ;
To that crushed soul—that soul upon the rack !

She buried her wan face ;—as well *she* may
To whom no night is darker than her day.—
When lo ! a strange light lighted all the way.

Through her closed eyelids did the radiance shine
Which lit the pale flower of a virgin bine,
Twined round the cross-head of a road-way sign.

It was but a rude cross to point the path
To those who stray,—as many a wanderer hath ;
Set up in tenderness, and not in wrath.

The beauty of it fixed her to the spot.—
If her poor way she had awhile forgot,
Yet One took care that she should miss it not !

A clear hand, imaged on the carven wood,
Pointed to where the climbing wild-flower stood,—
(Like a white maiden beautiful and good) :

White, save for one seared leaf the night-wind blew
A moment o'er its pure and spotless hue ;—
A skeleton leaf, that all the white shone through !

She looked, to see whence glanced the living light,
And marked where high a feeble lamp shone bright ;
A guide to those to whom the way was night.

The lamp's glad rays streamed point-wise to the sky ;
Or so it seemed unto her dazzled eye :
But her soul saw it, too,—and could not lie !

So, from a chance-borne vision of delight,
She drew sweet comfort,—till her pain grew slight ;
And traced God's hand, graved in that hand of light.



THE SAXON BROTHERS.

A RECORD OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S FEAST.

MID Kingston's graves stood once a giant stone
 Whereon the newly crowned of England's kings
 Mounted ; and so took empire of the land.
 Brave Athelstan had set his foot thereon
 By warrant of his noble grandsire's choice,
 Alfred, our pearl of kings. Though basely born,
 Born of a shepherd maiden, yet no less
 His empire was the widest. None save he
 Had ruffled the grim raven of the Dane
 Beyond loud Humber. Those black wings no more
 Flapped for the victory. Athelstan was king
 Of all this land ; of Saxon kings the first.

Now mark what words he spoke, when, having won
 A certain battle 'gainst a Briton king,
 He gave him back his crown in vassalage.
 "Better it is," he said, "to make a king
 Than be a king."

In some such mood of heart
 He roamed one dusk-browed night among the graves
 Where towered the vast—once sacred—stone of kings ;
 Leading his young boy-brother by the hand.

Subdued by eager questions of the child
 Against his better reason—for the hour
 And scene alike were solemn and unfit

For such a tale of horror and affright
Poured in the quick ear of a senseful soul—
He climbed the stone, and perched the boy thereon ;
And, sitting low where stood the child's young feet
One arm thrown round him for his strong support,
He told him all his penance and his pain.

“ ‘ Giver of Bracelets’ do they call me ? So ;
But here is one I may not give away.
Behold ! ”

And, folding back his broidered sleeve,
He showed the boy a band with seven sharp spikes
Probing the galled flesh of his sword-arm wrist.

“ By a black traitor was I once beguiled.
The man is outlawed, boy ; but will not hence.
Him see I still, or devil in his shape,
Dogging my steps ; and, haunting, edge my throne.
He ever comes betwixt me and the sun :
Or, like a slough-hound, scents the murderous air
I breathe, far off, and steals with stealthy plod
On my mailed heels, hot thirsting for my blood.”

“ Brother, when I'm a man—”

“ When thou'rt a man !
No haste—no haste. 'Tis time enough for that.
Awhile, oh ! yet a little while rejoice
That thou art but a child. A little while
Bear the rich burthen of unsullied life
Whose crown wears lighter than the crown of kings.
While thou'rt a child, thou'rt true. Once grow to man,
Thou may'st be guiltful and as prone as I.”

“ Best brother !”

“ ’Twas our brother whom I slew.

Nay, shudder not. I did not strike him down.
I firm believed he plotted ’gainst my life ;
Beguiled by that arch-fiend.—(Boy, didst thou speak ?
Hark, child ! What step is that ? ’Tis gone : ’tis nothing.)
In a wrecked boat I set him on the sea ;
He, and his armour-bearer. Sudden dread
Beset him, of the crazy bark, and roll
Of the long-billowed waters ; and he plunged
Where the sea-monsters gripped him for a prey.
His armour-bearer, borne unscathed to land,
(Now mark you that ! The boat was worthy still.
May God’s love note it in the day of doom !)
Came back to my throne’s foot ; and told a tale
So full of anguish and so full of ruth,
I cursed my life. Thenceforth, through seven long years,
I’ve wept a brother—as I weep him now.”

The head of Athelstan was buried low,
Dropped on his clenching hand. But the boy’s eye,
And youth-quick ear, were struck with sights and sounds
Among the dull deep shadows of the graves,
Which had no warrant there.

Past where the moon
’Twixt the sepulchral cedars sent a sheet
Of light, as of a molten silver lake,
Wherein the fringes of the willows dipped
Weeping, strode forth the giant bulk of Lulf,
The rank false witness. Noiseless was his tread
As a smooth pard’s upon a hungering quest

Of blood. Swift passed he through the moonlight lake
And silent air that silvered round the spot.
Yet, as he passed, his upturned face the moon
Blasted with such a clear truth-telling shaft,
That fatal moment he was signed for doom.

The boy's eyes fastened on the traitor's face.
He neither blenched, nor spoke ; but drooped his head,
And kissed his guardian brother on the brow.

His guardian brother lifted face, and said :
“ I know that he is near me ; for I feel
The deeper goading of mine iron brace
Which nips from out my sword-arm half its might.
The man has passed but now. I know his foot :
It has an evil fall. But let him pass.
A second murder shall not stain my soul.—
Come ; let us forth. The air is foul with night :
And fouler with that lurking wolf in fold.”

Perchance that hour had England mourned her king,
(Save for one blot, her fair-lived Athelstan,)
But for the saving presence of the child ;
Who bent above him like a sprite of heaven,
Dealing sweet comfort in a wordless love.

Now stealthy crept the pard-like hungering years.
Our true-lipped Athelstan had kissed the dust.
His young boy-brother sat upon his throne ;
Called “ Edmund the Magnificent ;”—alas !
For earthly splendour and the gauds of kings :
His better name “ Protector of his Kin.”

It was the saint Augustine's feast : the day
Rich with the memories of the Silver Cross.
The nobles all drank deep. The wild north blood
Was quick with wine. And "wassail !" was the cry
That drowned the voice of fate in the dulled ear.

King Edmund's eye, as oft he drained the cup,
Went wandering thorough the great hall of feast ;
And to and fro among the reeling crew
Flew in quick search of one on whom his hate
Had set its mark : the fiend-false witness, Lulf.
His mind was fixed the man would show once more,
Now bolder grown, since Athelstan was dust :
Such rumours through his brain, of that near foe,
Spoke in each pulse of his prophetic blood.

The wine flowed free. His veins ran fire. At last
His eye shot to his mark ; and up he sprang !

A moment's space he wrestled with his wrath,
Ere it o'ermastered him : a moment, clutched
With both nerved hands upon his broad-armed throne,
As if to balance for a forward lunge.
Then on his brother's foe—thence thrice his own,
He hurled his length. Swift seizing by the hair
The daring robber of that brother's peace,
He rolled him to the ground ; and with him rolled,
Fierce grappling.

Wonder seized the guests. Transfixed
They stood : for one brief, breathless instant checked
By doubt if Edmund's brain were sane or wode.
Then, all up springing, rushed to shield their king.

Full fifty faithful swords drank deep the blood
Of that most miserable, lying slave.
But the false weapon, and the falser hand
Of Lulf, had lapped the blood of the best king
And princeliest soul in all the living land !

That felon blade struck home. The great,
The loyal heart, lay beating out its blood
Among the wine-lees on the reeded floor,
And England wept the promise of a king.



SONG OF THE RISING LARK.

I was woke in the grass
 By the delicate pass
 Of a gossamer thread.
 With a start, with a spring,
 Up I fled! up I fled!
 Lake, forest, and valley before me were spread
 Dingle and meadow-ring,
 Shingle and lea,
 Glimmer and shimmer and ripple of sea.
 Higher, higher,
 My wing's desire!
 Higher, higher, higher, higher.
 Small as spines on the thistle
 The white spires bristle,
 No wider, no taller,
 Smaller and smaller.
 Higher, higher,
 My wing's desire!
 Up the fire-mountain, by fountain and fountain
 Of fire!
 On the topmost cone
 A white eagle's feather is waving alone.
 Higher, higher,
 My wing's desire!
 Let me swim, let me swoon
 In the rush of the whirlwind that swirls 'neath the moon.

Higher, higher, higher, higher !—
Oh ! the drive of the rack.
Still ! Still ! Still ! Still !
The rush and the thrill
 Beat me back ;
 In the strife
 Breathlessly, deathlessly
 Fighting for life.
Take back the rush again ;
Give me the hush again.
Let me soar, soar, soar
Through the golden door.
 Higher, higher,
 My wing's desire !
Higher, higher, higher, higher !—
 The delight, the delight !
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet !
 After the rush
 What a calm, what a hush !
 After the roar,
 So to soar, so to soar
 Through the golden door !
 No higher, no higher,
 My wing's desire !
 I should faint in the fire.
 Light upon light,
 Heat upon heat,
 Bright upon bright,
 Sweet upon sweet ;
Silence on silence floating out stealingly
 Hushfully, feelingly,
After the whirlwind not a pulse-beat !

All asleep, asleep,
Asleep in the still,
Folded deep ;
Asleep in the still of the broken will
Touched by the universe tenderly, healingly.
All around
Not a sound,
Left or right
Not a sight,
Only the stars sailing fleet after fleet
Still as night.
Lapsed in supineness,
O ! the divineness,
After the whirlwind not a pulse-beat !
Light upon light,
Heat upon heat,
Bright upon bright,
Sweet upon sweet ;
Wings in the wilderness, worlds at the feet,
Sweet !
Sweet !
Sweet !



SEASIDE LIFE AND LEGEND.



Seaside Life and Legend.

A STRANGE COURTSHIP.

“HE comes, you say, to-morrow?”

“Yes; he comes

With the next sun that smiles.—Shall you be glad?”

“O, more than glad!—My one, own brother! He
I never saw; so soon to take his way
To far Ionia.—And his tutor, too,
I think you said comes with him? Read, read all;
Dear governess, the letter is to you.”

“I pass, dear Laura, a few flattering words
Your father writes—they praise me over-much.
Sir John is ever kind, most kind to me,
Me, your poor governess. I pass those words;
The rest runs thus:—‘Pray let my children meet,
And be as much together as they will;
It is not well that children of one house
Should be bred up at distance. Soon my son
Starts for the old Greek Isles, where he shall take
His little sister’s picture in his mind;

To live, a pleasant thought, in after years
When only they are left of all their house.
As for his tutor, a grave moody man,
As savage as a yet unmuzzled bear,
Show him, I pray, what courtesy you can,
The while my children sport beside the sea.
He has much learning : you well love old lore ;
Perhaps he may prove less niggard of his speech
Than my son still reports him.' ”

“ How I wish
The horrid man would stay at Brasenose ! ”

“ Nay, let us make the best we can of him.
A diamond sometimes shows but in the rough
A sorry gem at first.”

“ How dull for you !
I and my brother playing on the beach,
My poor old aunt for ever wheeled about,
And you no one to talk to but this bear.”

“ A little discipline may do me good.
You know you spoil me all, till I forget—
Almost, not quite—that I am but a stray,
A weed on this great ocean of the world
Set floating early, tangled in the drift
That bears me on ; close clinging here and there,
Where'er I find a gentle holding, dear.
A little staff, like Laura, is enough
For me to cling to.”

Saying which, her arms
She wound about the light form of the girl,
And sealed a silent, lifelong bond of love.

There stands an old grey castle by the sea
 Perched on a chalk-cliff hill, where tamarisk trees
 Wave to the wind, and 'gainst the bright waves set
 Their rosy stems,—like youthful fingers held
 Before the sun,—to screen the fairer face
 Of nature blooming amid flower-bed lawns
 That lie within the decked old court and keep.
 It is a place for spring-time, when the balls
 Of amber-flowered japonica drop down
 The ruined wall, like orbs from sceptred hands.
 It is a spot for lovers, and yet more
 For those denied of love. The place is rich
 With many memories of our English land.
 The lone may pause upon its antique ground
 And muse of battles, kings, and 'dusty death.'

Day after day, in arbourage so rich ;
 Week after week ; and month on rolling month ;
 The woman-teacher and all-learnèd man
 Took counsel of the waters, rocks, and skies.
 And some slight sparring, too, of wits was theirs—
 A salt that savoured much the too stale bread,
 So duly served, of every-day discourse.

One eve, when they were resting 'mid the bowers,
 Looking abroad upon the motley crowd,
 Some bitter words of woman-hating spleen
 Broke from the man. To which she calm replied :

"We are, I think, sir, what you make of us."

"Must we, then, answer for your every freak
 Of fashion? Do we trick you out, now this,
 Now that way; with a stiffened robe to-day,

To-morrow with a garment limp as nets
Yon careless fisher-boy drags through the brine?
A simile that holds in more than that;
For all your garments are but meshes fine
To catch unwary ——."

"Fish? They're cunning, too;
But over busy in their own high way.
The sun that breaks upon their glittering scales
Perchance may dazzle them. For our poor robes,
Most women that I know make sweet appeal
Unto the lords who rule them in their homes.
The answer is: 'Still wear what others wear;
Make not yourself a mock for gaping eyes.'
This 'do as others do,' so lightly said,
'Tis this which mars us all. It seems to me
Women are less like flocks of sheep than men."

"You're complimentary."

"I'm true, I hope.
That truth is sharp, pray lay not to my charge."
"Would you could all be true in higher things!"
"Why, there again you cavil without cause.
Give us the chance: then see what we may be."
"Of course; permit you to go lecturing forth
To grinning students."

"Not so; lecture us
The rather. Give us of your wealth of mind:
Teach us in gentleness, and we will learn;
And bless the hand that led us gently up
The weary steep we cannot climb alone."

"You're gentle now. You have as many moods
As yonder deep. Mark how it surges up,
Then breaks in foam-wreaths on the enamoured shore
That draws it, sparkling, to his wide embrace!
The very sands seem all aglow with life!
The changefulness of ocean—is't not sweet?"

"Sweet as the constant face of heaven, that looks
Upon the sea as mother on her child,
And, seeing her own image in its face,
Feels keenly it is hers. See! bending, breaks
The sky in smiles the sea gives back again.
Mark where the clouds glide floating far away
Like angry passions from a child's first kiss!"

"You're fond of children?"

"Yes; but knew it not
Till I knew Laura. Do you love them, too?"

"Not I.—Yes, Laura; just as I should love
A little sister, had I one."

"You are——."

"Alone in all this bitter, biting world."

"Not now—not now! Not since you came to us.
I think that Laura loves you; for I note
That while the child plays busy on the shore,
And gives her idle brother tasks to do,
She often lifts her face to where you brood,
So sorrowfully musing. When you chance
To smile upon her, she breaks out in smiles,
As though a dearer brother were in you
Than nature gave her in the youth you teach
To be the pride and honour of his house."

“That is no sign of love. You do as much
Yourself, who hate me and my bearish ways.
If I but laugh, you catch the simple trick
Of giving back my mood. A lunatic
Is treated thus, one dare not differ from
Lest he should seize us in his sudden arms
And leap with us a crag into the sea !
If I am black in melancholy, then
You grow as miserably like myself
As my twin-spirit. ’Tis a sign of hate.”

“Most grieved am I that so you should mistake
An honest wish to see you more at ease.
If I knew how——.”

“Then smile when I am sad.”

“I cannot.”

“When I am in merry mood,
I pray you look a little sullen on me.”

“I cannot, for my life ! Your smiles infect
The happy world about you. Dancing lights
Play all about the flowers, till they stir
Their petals and grow winged with innocent joy.
The airy scope of nature makes the most
Of that most seldom gladness, as the skies
Bend to a bow of beauty after storm.”

“I shall be better hence. I will go back,—
Not to my home ; I have none : back to college,
And take a fellowship in place of wife.”

“A wife, though but a shrew, would help you most.
Hard men have done their best to harden you.”

"Am I so hard?"

"Hard to yourself, I mean."

"Not hard to you?"

"I think not of myself:

I, too, am used to cuffs and buffetings—

Or was, at least, until I sheltered here.

All love me here——."

"Including Reginald?"

"I hope to make him friend to me, as well

As his young sister and the good Sir John."

"And nothing more?"

"I understand you not."

"I may seem rude; but—might it not be well

To cultivate a softer feeling still?

A baronet is not amiss, though poor."

"I should be angry. Yet I can but smile

To think in all this time how little way

I must have made in your esteem. Were there

But one man in the world, and marriage meant

For me, love, safety, honour, and—a home,

I could not owe them to my master's son.

Whose heart so noble to believe me true

Both to myself and him? What though I loved

Him, as I could love some far other man

I ne'er have seen—perchance may never see,

What warrant could I give that all my love

Were not a show—a bribe—to win a place

Was never meant for me? What! steal a son?

A poor return for such a warm regard

As makes me here a house-child in his home."

"You, then, could like him well, if things were other

"He seems a youth of promise most in that
Which savours of your teaching; is well learned,
But somewhat cold, I think. He does not love
His sister Laura as she should be loved.
Impatient is he ever when the child
Entreats him to some pastime at her hand.
You never are so, never!"

"True; I like
The child: one must love something——."

"Good or bad,
It not much matters which. All the great joy
Of love is in the giving."

"There you miss
The truth! All my love given is nothing—less:
I must have your love—have it now—have all,
Given up to me in bond to have and hold!
Give—give it me!—Nay, do not rise, in doubt
If I am sane or mad. You're love I'll have;
Aye, though I die for it!"

"A merry jest.
I fain would smile at it."

"It is no jest:
'Tis fateful, fearful earnest. I'll have love—
Your love,—its full assurance, given as free
As the free winds that kiss that flushing cheek
Which sets my wild heart throbbing with a hope.
Tell me it is the rose-bud of the west
That comes to say my life's sun is not set,
Though night and darkness draw upon the world:

Before I slip my secret to the winds
 That round you cannot blow and hold deceit,
 Answer me—here at once—with all your soul;
 My Marian, do you love me?"

"Hold, a little;
 My eyes are dim. You're sudden. I am weak.
 Is it the sun between the tamarisk boughs—
 Or see I but the waving of the stems?
 A bird seems fluttering in my breast. My heart
 Beats as it never beat—will ne'er beat more
 If now you should forsake me."

"Call me yours,
 And trust your sweet head on my guardian breast."
 "My friend!—Nay, more, my love—for life, for death,
 And oh beyond, for ever and for ever!"
 "Your Reginald."

"My Reginald?"
 "Your own;
 The son of good Sir John. Pardon the plot;
 Pardon for love's sweet sake!"

"It was not well."
 "It was most shameful—hateful. I could curse
 Myself for putting such a cheat on you.
 Yet this believe: whatever be my sin
 In changing places thus with yonder dolt,
 'Twas less my scheme than my good father's plan
 To bind you to us, spite of your sweet self."

"I see it all. You did it but to make
 My heart and conscience light. My pardon then;
 As full as I can speak it.—Nay, my cheek.
 Well—take it from my lips, then; they are yours."

ALL shrouded by the blackening fog, sea-borne with
sail ;

The prayers upon our quivering lips bursting in one loud
wail ;

Two living days, two deathless nights, we swept before
the gale !

The giant billows scared us not, despair had palsied
fear :

Time was annulled ; hope was so far, eternity so near.

The earth slipped from us silently, as an old forgotten
year.

No room was there for one sweet thought in all that
boundless space :

In Memory's eyes, so fixed, so stern, our souls could
find no grace.

The sins of all our lives rose up and mocked us to the
face.

Grim forms, torn frantic from their hold, the cruel waters
waft ;

Till one dread cry along the sea rolls echoing fore and
aft :—

‘ God ! who shall be the last to stand *alone* upon the
raft ?’

It came : the sickening horror grew, like shapes that
thrill our sleep.

As dropped each corse, these eyes beheld the ravening
fishes leap.

Of seventy souls, one only left to brave the angry deep !

With streaming hair, the dead, stone-eyed, peered where
the raft was riven ;

And through the chinks white faces glared, defying fate
and Heaven :

Till seemed the planks whereto I clung by the snaked
furies driven.

Long gazed I soul-struck and appalled. I could nor
bless nor pray.

My life, like ships on rapids borne, went down another
day ;

Where, robed in fog, the Levite sun passed scornful on
his way.

I nothing recked of shows or signs ; of mists that came
and parted ;

Nor rush of winds, nor chase of waves, nor birds my
presence started.

No voice brought more through my lost world bread to
the hungry-hearted.

Cold, gasping, tortured, and athirst, my maddening senses
failing,

Scarce could this arm the signal wave, some chance-
brought rescue hailing ;—

When lo ! a goodly ship, full trim, across the moon-wake
sailing !

Cast prone on the redeeming deck, sunk slow in shivering sleep,
By the meek tears down-dropping warm, I felt the angels weep;
And saw at last, with eyes of soul, God moving on the deep!



HOMEWARD BOUND.

ARE you sleeping—are you dreaming, are you dreaming,
love, of me ?

Or are you waking, thinking of your sailor on the sea ?
Of the day we roamed our English woods, your hand
fast locked in mine ;

Our day of happy, happy tryst by banks of bosky Tyne ?

O Marion, O Marion, the gale is piping loud,
The billows leap to mountains, and the foam lies like a
shroud ;

Far, far from land, alone I stand, to watch till it be day,
Mid the rolling of the thunder and the dashing of the
spray.

Sleep, sleep, my Marion, sleep and dream, my beautiful,
mine own !

Sleep is the orphan's silent land, and thou, love, art
alone :

Sleep, while the swaying branches bend into an arching
dome ;

Sleep, while the cry of winds goes forth to call the wild
bird home.

It is night, and storm, and darkness, Marion ; flashing
from the sky

Darts the fitful, lurid lightning, like a threat of God's
great eye ;

But dream thou 'tis the Norland gleam, the harmless
Norland light
He sends but as the herald of the glory of His might ?

Bless God, my darling, for the gift He dealeth unto thee,
Amid thy calm and sunny bowers, soft dreams of the
wild sea ;
And to me, whose glimpses of the land are beautiful as
brief,
To me, the storm-tossed mariner, the love of the green
leaf !

O doubly sweet my thoughts of thee upon the surging
main,
And doubly dear the day shall dawn that brings me back
again ;
When I tread your cottage garden—pluck the wall-flower
from the wall—
With my arm around my Marion's neck—the sweetest
flower of all !



RUDIGER AND UFELIA.

A RECORD OF EAST ANGLIA.

“ Seal is feon geneah
Mines fela leofan.”*

ANGLO-SAXON POEM.

A WOUNDED warrior in his last of fields,
King of the Varni, 'twixt the roll of Elbe
And Norland floods, lay stricken unto death.
“ Son Rudiger,” he cried, “ come swift and take
Thy sire's last blessing. Take, too, my last word
Of counsel—nay, command. Yon Anglian maid
Forget thou e'er hast seen. My kingdom lies
In peril of the Frank. Wed thou forthwith
The gracious sister of Theodebert.
So may'st thou patch new peace, and of old wars
Lay down the sword.”

He said, and saying dropped
Out of the roll of living kings.

Struck dumb
Stood Rudiger, of purpose all astray ;
His young world darkened by the new-made Shade :
The face of heaven ominous ; the rush
Of fiery meteors, messengers of doom

* “ The bond is far broken of my greatly beloved.”

Cleaving the winged winds, breaking the red ranks
Of spear-bright stars ; the driving rack alive
With old ancestral spectres ; the mute moon
Ringed with a tearful halo ; and the night
Hushing her sobs in the deep dusk profound.

By torchlight was the old dead king inurned,
His sons and kindred following one by one
As each should reign in turn of time and doom.
By torchlight moved the bridal bands in links
Of two and two, as hearts in bondage move.
'Twas noted that a young child ran between
The first and second son : a sign full sure
That Rudiger would see his son, in place
Of his next brother, on their father's throne.
'Twas noted, too, that twixt the bridal pair
A roe made rush to pass ; unlinking hands
But newly clasped in clasp of wedded bond :
A wild white roe with startled eyes of flame,
And hoof that dashed the swart earth in the face
Of that young sister of Theodebert,
Who weeping turned and sought her damsel's arms,
And lay as one for whom the curse of life
Had turned to blessed death.

There is an isle
Bristled with thorns amid our wasteland meres.
Therein a princess, white as that white star
Which blooms upon the thorns of Thorney's isle,
Paced to and fro the palace' reedy floor
Of long-dead Uffa ; listening for the tread
Of one, fleet-footed, that through mire and flood
Had toiled and waded, but to bring the last

Wild confirmation of her long-held fear
 Sealed in the sealing of the plotted wrong.
 And, ever as she paced, ere stooping paused
 Her brooding ear to gather up the sounds
 That mocked her, laughed in scorn, and sang,
 And sang and laughed by turns ; still, as she sang
 Tuning her burthen to the swallow-call,
 The call of the sweet swallow o'er the sea.

“ The call of the swallow sounds over the sea ;
 But where the winds flutter, and falter, and fall
 To the call of the swallow, the sweet swallow-call,
 No swallow, no swallow comes over to me.

The call of the swallow, the cry of delight,
 Rings loud o'er the billows white-rocking with foam
 Mid the darkness of seas, in my old Norland home ;
 But the sound of the swall-call breaks not my night.

Oh, swallow, black swallow, with breast white of plume,
 Call, call me my lover !—or scream in his ear
 He shall come, he shall wed ; he shall love me, or fear ;
 Raven swallow, dove swallow ! bird of joy or of doom !”

And even as she sang, in that same hour
 The pallid messenger with breathless speed
 Outstripping the winged winds, bore on unstayed
 Across the Anglian marsh.—In that same hour
 Among the dancing marsh-lights midst the thorns
 A fire was kindled which a field of blood
 Should quench not, till the fated hour drew down
 The gods had written on a scroll of cloud.

Her barks were out upon the Norland sea.
 She led her fleets as leads a leader-swan

Her trooping flocks along the wintering skies.
Her arm was twined about the mast ; her robe
Its floating sail : and to the rapid beat
Of oars, in lift and fall, her beating foot
And measured voice kept eager time and tune.

“ Row me, my rowers,
Row me, my rowers,
Row, row me swift o’er the Norland sea.
Girt by the golden sand
See ! where my Angel-land,*
Land of my forefathers, beckons to me !
What does the storm-bird cry ?
What does the storm-bird cry ?
List ! as it skilts o’er the hill-wastes of sea.
‘ The wild roe shall sever
The bride-bond for ever.’—
Come good or come evil, come vengeance to me !
What do the waters cry ?
What do the waters cry ?
Heaving our bark like the mounting of wings !
‘ Uplift her, upbear her ;
Woe to him, the forswearer.’—
Woe to him who betrays me, the daughter of kings !
What do the wild winds sigh ?
What do the wild winds sigh ?
Hark to them !—bear away, row while ’tis night.
‘ In the guardless moon’s keeping
The foemen are sleeping.’—
Bear, bear away steadily, row with your might !

* “ The country called Angelland.”—BEDE.

What does the spirit cry ?
 What does the spirit cry ?
 See ! where it darkens the rack with its form !
 ‘ To the red field of slaughter,
 On !—seize him, my daughter !
 Seize, seize him in darkness, flight, terror, and storm !’

Row, row me, my rowers,
 Row, row me, my rowers,
 Row, row me more swift o’er the Norland sea !
 The wild roe to cover,
 The bride to her lover,
 But the battle, the battle, the battle to me !’

The moon looked o’er his rampant of the cloud.
 He saw where near the hazy belt of brine
 The Varnian warriors lay along their shields.
 Sleep stole upon him in mid-watch. While hushed
 He lay in shadow of the gloomy wall,
 The busy shore was all astir with life.
 Up, rang a trampling and a clang of arms.
 Grasping his silver shield and starry spear,
 Too late he, starting, rushed to heaven’s front.

All the wild rout of battle was afoot.
 The fields were darkened by the slaughtered. Down
 Trampled were victors, foemen, and the steeds
 Of war. The white horn of the wild white bull
 In vain rang out recall. Pursuing fast
 And far, the eager conquerors flew winged
 After the conquered flying.

In her tent

Stood mute Ufelia, broken now to war
 That rode her to the death.

Back swift came one,
Back swift another, breathless all with news
Of how the battle went.

“The field is won !
The bands of Rudiger lie swamped in blood !”
“And Rudiger ?—Quick, speak ?—Alive or dead ?”

“Prince Rudiger alone made good his flight.
On the huge steed of dread Theodebert——”

“Gone !—Gone ? Ye dare not say it ! Gone !—Away !
Go, seize the flying horses of the foe,
And bring him instant here to me, or die !”

“The horses of the foe flee wild and wild ;
But of the great steed of Theodebert
The hoof-marks course this way.”

“What ! will he fling
Scorn in my face ? Ye gods !——”

Her words broke short.
The hurried messenger was gone. The tent
Rolled sudden up as rolls a quick-loosed scroll :
And, keen with that rare breath 'twixt night and morn
Ere owns the shivering earth the striding sun,
Strange airs of heaven blew upon her breast.—
He stood before her. And she stood wide-eyed,
And her heart stopped its beating, daunted half
By the strange sight of him : in stature grown ;
Vested with god-like form, and aspect new
Of power and passion, masterful and strong
To quell the ireful heavens with a look.—
The paleness of new dread, mysterious awe,

And anger sudden cooled at whitest heat,
Showed corpse-like on her cheek.

He saw ; and said,
“ Better the death-wound had I borne, than bear
To see that face of whiteness fixed on me,
Beauty with Death so warring. Lift away
Those eyes !”

Those eyes were lifted not ; but dropped,
And from his face fell to his deep-gashed thigh
And down the mangled limb to streaming foot.—
All her voice strings were jarring now ; but with
A forceful will she mastered them to cry :

“ Bring you your gaping wounds to move my pity ?
That blood is of your shedding, not of mine.—
Go, to the sister of Theodebert.
The hands of love may bind the wounds of man,
But who shall bind the wounds of love ! I thought
To break thy bow of battle, and to break
Thy life in loving bonds, even as I broke
The false, false idol set up in my heart ;
Break them, as thus I break my father’s sword
Whose righteous use has been to war on thee,
And ne’er shall combat in a cause less just
Or lap the life out of a meaner foe.—
I thought that I could do it, and I would.
But something stronger than my will, the will
Of Odin and the most immortal gods
Moves me to spare thee. Else a fool were I
To win a captive and so soon yield up
My rights in him. See ; I am equalled now

Even to the feeble daughter of the Frank,
The soulless sister of Theodebert."

With that, her glorious eyes streamed full on his,
That drank them as a thirsty river-bed
Which starves for lack of waters in a wild.—
And his eyes fixed her ; as the snake's the bird's
That feels itself ensnared in some new coil,
Yet makes a feeble flutter ere it drops.

" Ufelia.—Hero's bride !—Ufelia."

" The sister of Theodebert is yours.
Go, win you Frankish spoils on Gallic shores :
I and East Anglia are my own. My own
I am, I say. Then wherefore grow your eyes
On me ? Nor bride am I, nor slave. Too free
Are those your eyes."

" Why now the rose comes back !

Now dare I claim you mine, nor see you fall
Self-slaughtered by the sweep of your just ire
Which clove me with its edge.—Ufelia.
Ufelia ! Wild white roe ! Avenging
Angel of Angel-Land ! Avenged wert thou
Before thou brok'st my bow of battle. Lone
Weeps the scorned sister of Theodebert.
To heart of thine alone this heart must beat.
There is a fire within thy nature, girl !
Fit sole to mate with that of the Varni's king.
The gods have said it ; and my will is theirs.
Are yet my tardy banners were afloat,
While slept my warriors, waiting for the dawn,

The Coursers of the Air had winged thee hither.
A fate is on thee, and my bride thou art.—
Hear me. While following mute our sire's dead corse,
Betwixt me and my next-born brother ran
A child that wore thy face. Mounted my soul
As a quick flame that, swaying, veered to thee.
By Odin ! but thy love shall meet its match.
Though thou hast smitten me well-nigh to death,
I'll live to be the glad sire of a son
Shall bear the mark of heroes on his front :
Ufelia, thou his mother ; not the weak
And puling sister of Theodebert.
No hand of hers my wounds shall ever bind :
Kneel thou, and bind them !”

And with dragging limbs

He threw himself before her. And she knelt,
 Wordless, and bound them.

On the seas, by night,

A bark bore back to Anglia with the spoils
 Of battle. As one casts a roe-skin prone
 Upon the hard-ribbed planks, Ufelia threw
 Her lovely length : and 'cross her breast she drew
 The battered body of shorn Rudiger.
 There, rocking to the rocking of the seas,
 He lay and raved with stinging of the wounds
 That bled into her bosom : and he dreamed
 His soul was in Valhalla with the gods !



Even to the feeble cl
The soulless sister

With that, her gl
That drank them
Which starves for
And his eyes fix
That feels itself
Yet makes a fe

“ Ufelia.—He:

“ The sister of
Go, win you
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the blessèd land !
 icy air ;
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 with a prayer.

ry tempest raved,
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 —a rescued soul !

II.

ld has lived, bloomed, loved, and died.
 e the old man lies :
 er sea, of stiller tide,
 eals o'er his closing eyes.

ws now for him no tropic light ;
 But, where life's waters freeze,
 he glory of the Polar night—
 'The calm of arctic seas !

His hard-earned gold beneath the deep
 Lies hid ;—but where is she,
His God-gift, whom the star-worlds keep,
 His daughter of the sea ?

Where cloud-waves foam the rippled skies,
 Touched by the golden day,
An angel form in angel guise
 Floats up the liquid way.

TWO SEAS.

I.

A MARINER by tempest crost
 Lay struggling with the wave ;
 His one sole hope—all else was lost—
 His hoarded gold to save.

Slung from his neck—a weary weight—
 His precious charge he bore ;
 His failing strength, at war with fate,
 Could bear no feather more.

But not against his life alone
 Uprose the breakers wild ;
 A woman, on the billows thrown,
 Held up her drowning child.

“Save her !” she cried, “in mercy save !”
 As through the surf she rolled :
 He heard ; and cast beneath the wave
 His prize of Indian gold.

Fearless he breasts the tropic storm,
 Aside the waters flinging,
 While round his neck, all soft and warm,
 Two infant arms are clinging.

He hails the land—the blessèd land !
He drinks its spicy air ;
He strains to reach its coral strand,
He greets it with a prayer.

Vainly the angry tempest raved,
His feet have touched the goal ;
And, with his living burthen saved,
He stands—a rescued soul !

II.

The child has lived, bloomed, loved, and died.
Alone the old man lies :
Another sea, of stiller tide,
Steals o'er his closing eyes.

Glow now for him no tropic light ;
But, where life's waters freeze,
The glory of the Polar night—
The calm of arctic seas !

His hard-earned gold beneath the deep
Lies hid ;—but where is she,
His God-gift, whom the star-worlds keep,
His daughter of the sea ?

Where cloud-waves foam the rippled skies,
Touched by the golden day,
An angel form in angel guise
Floats up the liquid way.

He follows, hushed in rapt delight,
Of dread and death beguiled,
She, swimming slow with pinions bright,
He, clinging like a child !

The dross of earth is cast away ;
She leads him by the hand.
Through heaven's blue sea her white wings
play :
He nears the happy land.

She parts the wave that beats him back ;
He breasts life's surge no more :
His feet, upon an angel's track,
Have touched the immortal shore !



THE SINGER OF THE SEA.

A LEGEND OF THE ORKNEYS.

THERE lives a strange wild legend of the isles—
That to the sea-lashed Orcades there came
A wondrous stranger in a golden boat,
Drawn by a white-winged swan across the deep ;
And springing light to land, like one who bore
Winged message from the gods, there dwelt, and won,
By heaven-taught spells, the daughter of a king.
But after time—so runs the legend old—
The spiritual guest made sail again,
Turning the swan's beak toward some far-off land,
And left his true wife weeping by the shore ;
Nor ever more to mortal sight came back.
Gone was the golden boat, the white-winged swan,
The wondrous stranger but a vanished dream,
A living memory of a lovely past.

In that sad legend lies a heart-true tale :
For that same wondrous stranger was a man
Of glorious gifts—a Singer of the Sea.
He drew his breath on ocean's breast, and loved
The roar of billows ! loved it with the love
That *will* find voice, till to his lips there sprang
The sweetest strains that e'er tranced mortal ears,
Still singing of the sea.

The Princess of the rugged Orcades,
Bred up in simple ways, a maiden lone,
Of noble orphanage, her sire a king—
Her mother long had slept beside the sea—
Knew little of the world beyond the shore.
Small wonder, then, that when the stranger drew
His white-winged Condor of the sea to land,—
Upon whose marge she watched the drifting bark
That, water-logged, toiled slowly towards the shore,
A shattered hulk,—himself forlorn and wrecked,
Without a home or holding in the world,
The Princess, hearing nothing but his voice,
And seeing only sorrow in his face,
Should give him royal welcome in the land.

He stood, an alien midst her father's guests,
And stranger day by day, to all save her ;
They mocked him all, and said the man was mad ;
He, a sea-waif, to lift his daring eyes
Unto the Princess of the Orcades.
And soon a secret plot was set a-foot—
The king, her father, foremost in the scheme—
To cheat the wanderer with a show of love ;
And when the plot was ripe, and he should deem
The Princess his, to give him in her stead
A hireling damsel at the altar, veiled.

The plighted hands upon the priest's were laid :—
The blessing given, the stranger drew aside
His hidden bride to gaze upon her face.
All watched with eager eyes to mark his start
And flush of rage when he should learn the che
But, softly raising the thick bridal veil,

Entranced he stood, as one who, new to life
And joy, beholds some vision of delight.

It was the Princess of the Orcades !
And, turning soon from the love-lifted eyes
That fixed their wealth of soul upon her face,
She greeted low her sire and all his court
With a most downcast look, but steadfast heart,
Speaking with voice like flute-notes on the wind.

“ Pardon, my sire, if that I pardon need.
The hireling damsel loved him not. I love
This man. To wed him, then, in her were sin :
In me, my simple duty, so I deem—
He prizing me before the God-made world.
My mother taught me this, who so loved you,
And gave you troth-plight, spite of all the world.
You made her sorrowful : so may he me—
Though yet believe I not the thing I say ;
Yet be it if it must. ’Twere better so
Sorrow should come with love, than joy without,—
If any joy can be where love is not.
I take my lot with him. Though he be poor,
His soul is rich. The sea will bear us both
With loving-lifted waves to other lands.
Or we can live like halcyons on the breast
Of the smoothed waters, nesting like the birds,
And charm the yeasty deeps with songs, till death
Shall gulf us in the smother of the sea.”

Her sire was moved, and bade the two remain :
And when he died, he gave the helm of state
Unto the once wrecked Singer of the Sea.

Then came a shipwreck greater than the first,
Where all was deluged in a sea of wrong.
For cruel deeds filled all the land with groans,
And busy tongues spoke evil of his name.
He who once loosed the rudder from his hold
When but a common sea had mastered him,
Dropped, too, the helm of state, and all was lost !

But soon he lay upon a bed of death.
Then all the blindness melted from his sight.
Gazing in ruth upon the weary eyes
Of her who wept his plight, but more his fall,
His lost, sweet, wondrous voice came back once more,
And pardon most entreatingly he prayed.

“To this sweet world, farewell ! since hence I go
From it, and thee, oh ! love, whom most I wronged.
Lay thou me down in pardon and in peace.
I know not how this life hath so beguiled
Me of that single heart which bore me once,
As a high-lifted wave, up even to God ;
Or how earth’s whirl could madden so the brain
That looked, deep-longing, for the upward light.
Two diverse natures seem I to have owned :
The two contended—and the evil won.
All now is past, love, here. Forgive me, thou,
For those sharp thorns that roughed thy once smooth
way.

Hold thou my memory as a pleasant song,
Sung of the wild waves on a wild wave’s crest.
And, so no kindless foot may spurn my dust,
Go, lay me where God’s deep my grave shall guard
Unto the coming of the day of doom.”

Up rose the Princess of the Orcades.
She swathed his dead limbs, and she laid him down
Within a narrow skiff, and put to sea,
And 'humed him in a distant western isle,
Beyond the lost Atlantis.

Calm he slept
Beneath his pillared death-stone. Day by day
As led the moon the strong tides up and down,
Like steeds of battle fuming for the fight,
At coming and at going still they flung
The wreathed foam round. Still up the pillar crept
The mounting waters, like, to God-ward thoughts.
Still, to the Princess of the Orcades,
Through the white light of days, the pillar shone
In beauty, as a soul that heavenward soared ;
And, mid the far-off chorus of the waves,
His wondrous voice seemed singing of that sea
Whereto he steered, borne by the golden boat
And swan-white wings beyond the set of suns.



UPON A CLIFF.

WHAT is it that men say of thee,
 Thou voiceful, ever-soothing sea ?
 " Oh ! melancholy deeps, whose craze
 Is still to dance on our dead days,
 Ye wear us with recurring throbs
 Which mock the sounds of human sobs,
 As all the dreary morn we lie,
 Vexed atoms, 'twixt the earth and sky
 Upon a cliff."

Rash human spirit, ever prone
 To set heaven's bounds and stretch your own ;
 Dead unto this great earth's completeness,
 Dead to the beauty and the sweetness
 Of waves whose gladdening motion breaks
 The silence of a heart that aches ;
 Take better thought, more softly move,
 And linger with a thought of love
 Upon a cliff.

Drink deep, thou hast but tasted yet.
 Drink deep ; the potion works. Forget
 Thy weak, small self. So, hourly draw
 The moral pure without a flaw
 Which lies along these chalky shelves,
 Valerian-crowned ; where tender elves

Which are the joys you cannot see
Peer out among the blooms for me

Upon a cliff.

Mark where the seabird landward sweeps.
He shuns not, he, the ruffled deeps.
A moment, baffled by the breeze,
He sails beyond the stretch of seas :
A moment, weary, worn of wing,
Up by the flower-steeps watch him cling.
See ! back he steers. Let thy soul fly ;
Not thankless fold its wings and sigh

Upon a cliff.

Drink deep ; gaze meekly ; you shall find
New life, new light for eyes so blind.
Mark how the restless glory flies
From crest to crest that dips and dies.
That grand wave-motion will not let
The weary, angry spirit fret.
The very tide that ebbs and flows
Breathes patience through our unrepose

Upon a cliff.

Keep me, oh, keep me, gracious sea,
For ever in thy sight to be !
Whatever comes, whatever goes,
Beat by the cruellest wind that blows,
Here would I lie, and watch thy heaving,
My coming wreck scarce half believing ;
Or midst the tempest's fret and frown
All my weak sobs in thy sobs drown

Upon a cliff.

THE HUNTRESS OF ARMORICA.

A LEGEND OF ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT.*

TOWER lordly as thou wilt, rise bold to heaven,
 Thou heaved-up pyramid of Careg Luz,
 No match art thou for woman in her will !
 Strike with the terrors of thy granite bulk
 The bondman gazing on thy spar-lit heights,
 Thou dauntest not the Huntress of the Hills !
 She who has scaled wild peaks to hunt the wolf
 In wide Armorica, and watched the flash
 That met the strong-winged arrow in the air,
 Snapping it as a reed, when thunders shook
 The land of Conan, bends no knee to thee.
 She sickens in thy mewed-up walls, and beats
 Thy rock with foot impatient to be free.

Bending above the sea-girt battlement,
 Her quick soul, struggling, marked the waves that bit
 The leaguered base and lapped the hollowed stone.
 Where high the tide rolled up the sparkling steep,
 She watched their course, and how they surged and dashed
 Through the grooved rock where once great tree-roots
 struck

* Careg Luz in Leuz. "The hoary rock in the wood."—*Celtic*.
 From this name, and from other indications, St. Michael's Mount is
 supposed to have been once surrounded by woods, long since sub-
 merged.

Their stealthy fangs and forced the crumbling block
To yield free pathway to the rushing surge.
How far the waters flowed she only knew,
And held her secret. On the further side
Her restless eye had marked a dwarf-low arch
Through which the darkened waters passed to light ;
Emerging from that unsuspected cave
A little upward from the level sea,
Toward which, down-borne, they fell in soft cascade.

While yet she mused there rang a summons shrill—
A trumpet-blast that shook the rarer breath
Of winds careering round the “Hoary Rock ;”
But shook no pulse of hers, the blast of horns
Familiar to her ear as cry of hounds
Upon an upland breezy with the swift
Wild chase of huntress forms, whose flowing robes
Make sail along the sunned Armoric peaks—
A summons to King Cathon in his hall.

Stately she stood—all grace, and lithe of limb ;
Her crescent eyes like Dian’s growing light
Out of the dusk bed of a fringing cloud :
Till, all full-orbed, they showed in depths serene
A strange new world man’s soul ne’er fathomed yet.

Long looked they each the other in the face.
Then Cathon spoke : “Defiant to the last !
Unmannered and unwomanly art thou,
Those stag’s eyes never vailing. Front to front
With man thou standest, as thou equal wert
To match thee with the giant ones of earth,
Great lords of thee and all thy weaker kind.

What, silent still?—But I will make thee speak :
My sister's daughter, thou art mine to rule.
Ere sinks the sun, thou weddest with mine heir ;
Or, yon pale captive in my dungeon's hold—
(Ha ! now thine eye half slips beneath the lid !)—
Shall float on that dread wave within the rock,
The rock's mouth closed ; there he in bondage foul
May breathe a toad's breath till he dies, starved out
Of life as love."

"I pray you, let me back
To wide Armorica."

"Back, 'cross the sea,
Without thy bold Armoric escort ? What !
Without thy hunter-hero and thy love ?"

"My love goes with me wheresoe'er I go."

"He dies the hour thou warrest with my will."

"My love goes with me wheresoe'er I go.
Breathes not the man, though fashioned like the gods,
Great Pen or Ju, can change or dwarf my love.
All the gods loved I love—the free-topped hills
Whereon Armoric maids go hunt the prey ;
The woven thicket and untangled glade ;
The gracious glories of the wooded world
Of glens, the pathways of bright streams, the streams
Our fathers worshipped, deeming they were gods
Who coursed white-footed through the wicked herd
Of men, still ever seeking, finding not
Sweet justice here on earth, and furious grew
Till they to torrents dashed in noble ire
To see man so disgrace his heritage,

This beauteous, ever-smiling, gracious world !
Give me my liberty !”

“ That is for man.”

“ For woman too.—Oh ! miserable man,
That on the vigour and the might Heaven gave
For his self-use, himself will put the curb !—
Give me my liberty.—Or take my life.
So one man in the world shall miss a mate
Would bear his load of cares in her full arms
And count them light, so he but trusted her
To mount her highest reach for love and him.”

“ The heir of Cathon is fit mate for thee
Wert thou the queen of all Armorica.”

“ I never served him : those we serve we love.”

“ His love be thou, or loveless shalt thou hence.”

“ My love goes with me wheresoe’er I go.”

Ringling that strange-tuned burthen in his ear
Went Eian forth, with steps that woke the rock
To a fond echo ; for the strong love strength :
It is the weakling only loves the weak.

Her doom was sealed—and Malo’s. Down the rock
Was Malo dragged, on his galled wrists the gyves
Which six long moons had scarred them : worn of limb,
The dungeon damps slow coursing through his veins
Like a white blood ; his once sunned lips all blanched
With hungering for the light.

Flung in a boat,
And cast afloat within the hollowed stone,
The silent captive touched the shores of death.—

Next, three strong hammermen to work were set
To block the mouth.

The strokes went up to her—
To Eian bending o'er the battled crag—
But as the thunder when the bolt has passed.
Quiet she stood ; resolve upon her lip ;
And like to one who has a task to do
In taking charge upon her soul for one
Dearer than self.

A moment down the cliff
She gazed, and marked the hammermen at work.
Then flew her glance on either side : till, sure
All eyes were turned to watch the hideous act,
She slipped beneath an arch.—Thence, came out armed,
Body and soul : and down the opposing side
Leaped light from crag to crag.

No foot save hers,
Young Eian's, on the mountains beautiful
Of wide Armorica, had ever tracked
Those toppling crags. Unscathed they bore her now,
Proud of their burthen, to the lowest peak—
As, streaming on, a shield behind her slung
By two light paddles crossed, like pirate flag
Bearing its skull and fleshless bones aloft
Bent on a prize to carry far to sea,
She fluttered—even to the lowest peak
That jutted on the deep.

There, swallow-like—
When under eaves the bird with clinging wing
Holds, with slight footing, peering here and there—

A ridge of rock she clasped with one spread arm,
And, hanging, slung with white face downward, peered
Through the long hollow of the rifted rock.

No light—no cheer! All dark as earth's great night
That shall be in the final crush of worlds.

No sound! save voice of the great outward sea,
And the dull sucking of the inward waves
Lapping and lapping in the rock-bound pass.

At length there rose a sound—her name!—"My Eian,
St. Michael shield thee." Blessed words of hope!

Soon a light coracle emerged to sight.

By the strong impetus of brutish hands
Sent fast and far upon its drifting way.

The boat with prisoned Malo, hand and foot
Bound like a slave, came forth the darkened cave
Into the light of liberty and love.

Marking her time, and springing like a roe,
Ere yet the boat dipped down the soft cascade,
She bridged the narrow space 'twixt death and love,
And, safe within the coracle, hushed down
The startled cry—"St. Michael!" on his lips.

Scant time was there for greeting fond; for now,
Once cleared the sheltering rocks, fierce eyes sent out
Their evil light; fierce hands strung quick the bows,
Till a broad shower of arrows o'er the sea
Came hurtling. But, his galling bonds unbound
By Eian's hand, glad Malo plied the oars,
While o'er his head the guardian shield she drew;
And with a harmless flight, like gulls that drop
White-winged upon the deep, the arrow flakes,
Snowed o'er the sea, on a curled wave were lost.

Then Eian bade him bear the shield aloft,
And in her stronger hands the paddles seized,
And darted like a swallow o'er the seas.

The seas smiled calm ; and the great heavens reserved
Their terrors for the guilty. Safe to shore
The lovers drew, and took glad pause of breath
Upon a friendly island of the main
Looking toward Sarnia's * bay. Then loosed the clouds
Their long-held wrath ; and, struggling to the crest
Of waters, wrestled close : till shore or sky
No man could tell from other. Such a storm
Was never hurled along the quivering seas.
Two boats pursuing from the British shore
Were swift engulfed. 'Twas said St. Michael rode
The angry blast, and struck them with his spear.
The corse of Cathon's heir, washed up the rock,
Glared grim his father Cathon in the face.

And up by other steepes, on kindlier shores—
In their own land, well-loved Armorica—
And down by slopes declining green with turf,
Sweet with the sea-bell and the low-cropped rose,
Strong Eian led her Malo ; led no more
The eager chase along the mountain peaks ;
Nor more delighted save in his delight.
To smooth the sick path of the stricken man ;
To rest beneath the hills, and watch the winds
Breathe healthful currents through his tortured blood,
Bright suns embrown him, and sweet rivers melt
In soothing music to his deadened ear ;
These best she loved.

* Guernsey.

But when new years burst forth
Out of the future, up the hills again
She went, to meet her hunter in his strength,
And bear his spoil with loving, gentle arms.
And up the steep hill slopes she taught to mount
With firm free foot the children of his love.
And yet, men say, on those Armoric heights
Two forms, like Dian's and Apollo's, matched
In matchless beauty, roam at burst of dawn ;
Still followed by a lovely swift-borne train
Than earthly children fairer, rayed with light,
And heralded by music of the winds,
Hunting the shades from clouded peak to peak—
The spirit children of the mountain land.



O T L A U G A.

To the Bay of Gull-Siken, the Golden Bay,
 In the golden gleam of the breaking day ;
 Rocked like a cradle of light on the seas ;
 Played by the wings of a wandering breeze,
 Came floating the harp of Otlauga.

Hooed in the rim of the small round harp,
 A mist-like form that a beam might warp ;
 Her streaming hair in its half-curved rings
 Playing at waves with the golden strings,
 Slept the child of the waters, Otlauga.

Guarding her lambs as they bask or play
 By the river of Kraaka * in Kraaka's bay ;
 Touching her harp like a water-flowing
 Still at the golden sun's coming and going,
 Sat the Sea-king's foundling, Otlauga.

Crowned by the lily of waters, the flower
 She brought from the deeps of her river bower ;
 Caught to his breast like a flash of the light
 Glinting his sword in a storm of night,
 Shone the bride of King Lodbrok, Otlau

* Another name for Otlauga or Aslauga.

The bride of King Lodbrok, the beauty of seas,
She bore up his soul like the lift of the breeze.
Her love it upgirt him, it nerved him for fight ;
Her soft harp enthralled him and lapt in delight,
The Skald of the hero, Otlauga.

When the last of his battles King Lodbrok had fought ;
When death in his grip the great sea-king had caught,
Both hero and harper sank down in the main,
And he was the king of the ocean again,
With his queen of the waters, Otlauga.



A CHRISTMAS WREATH.

A Christmas Wreath.



THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

THOUGH winter's hands lie pale upon the leaves,
And winter's whited wands on all the boughs ;
Though all the holly's stars are faded out
And wears she now the coral for the pearl ;
Though summer lies dead-cold upon the hills
In a mist-shroud, where autumn strewed her grave ;
Wreathe yet the cup of life and drink to love,
String yet the immortal lyre and sing to love,—
Since love of mortals and immortal love
Are twins in birth, as sleep and death are twins—
For innocent love is still the sweetest flower
That grows upon the thorny bush of Time ;
For youth, for age, the flower of all the world
Life's early snowdrop, and its Christmas Rose !

There lived a man who held a fancy strange.
He was too rich, he deemed, to win rich love.
Those of his rank, the maidens of the shire,
Had a strange trick—or much his whim belied

The stately daughters of those Norman lords,
Of looking, not at him, but, as it were,
Straight past him, to his acres stretched beyond ;
As though he were a shadow, and the sun
Showed still its golden best where he was not.

With this fixed thought deep-rooted in his mind,
He hit at length upon a wild device.
He took two orphan children by the hand
And built for them a flower-crowned lodge beside
The entrance to his avenue of limes ;
There to control the gate, keep watch and ward
Each day as he upon his mettled steed
Pranced forth to take his pleasure on his lands.

The little maids grew up in beauty's growth,
With a wide difference. The one was flushed
As roses are that kiss the light of suns,
And wild as hedge-row blooms that blow and shed
All in a day. The other was as pale
As Christmas' rose ; but gentleness was hers,
And sweetness,—and she wore them as a crown.

Each morn as forth the lordly rider passed,
Red Rose rushed out with saucy skip, and curls
Free-dancing down the wind, to ope the gate,
With lifted, gladdened eye, to serve his need,
And take for guerdon his approving smile.
But the pale Christmas Rose stood by, abashed ;
Nor other service rendered but such awe
As wearied him to note.

As years drew on
And these twin fairy maids, to women grown,
Gave promise of a grace for some glad home,
'Twas time, he thought, to pluck the favoured rose
Which for his coronal he meant to wear.
But how to choose?—Which was it loved him best?
Or was it gratitude or love they felt
For him who out of his abundance gave
A portion to the orphans at his gate?

Had he no liking, then, for either maid
More than her fellow? True, he thought he had.
His own full years wore yet their rosy bloom,
And the Red Rose seemed fairest to his eye.
But yet sometimes he thought—he knew not why—
The pure White Rose was richest at the core,
And, when its spring-time should have shed the leaf,
The paler flower might show the fairer fruit.

Perhaps, as thinking thus, he watched her more :
Or perhaps the hidden beauty of a soul
Like hidden gold within the violet's eye
Tempted the man to strive to lift that head
That drooped beside his gate—a sheltered flower.
Henceforth he noticed most the Christmas Rose ;
But for his courteous speeches, all he won
Was a faint, fleeting blush,—such light as morn
Sends thwart the snows upon the orient air.

The strangeness of the sight perplexed him much :
Why, on that other face 'twas always morn !
Red Rose was ever blooming—bloomed for all.

Then stirred the thought within his deeper mind
Those rosier rays were but an Arctic show,
The cold heart's northern lights, not the true dawn,
Forerunner of that glorious East of love
For whose broad beams his soul was all athirst.—
The Christmas Rose should be the rose for him !

But yet—how beautiful the full red flower !
Just for a moment, only for so long,
He thought “the franker girl may ‘prove as true
As she that hath more cunning to be strange.’”
But still the more he thought, the more perplexed
His spirit grew ;—till each fair rose alike
Bore thorns for him, and pricked him to the heart.

Out of his doubt at last he framed a way
To test the two. He spread report abroad
That he was sick : must breathe a softer clime ;—
Too rough these English winters for his frame.

He bade the two farewell. The Summer Rose
Drooped, as a sudden storm had weighed its bloom,
And in a shower of grief fell all to streams,
And helpless sank in silence by the gate.
The Christmas Rose looked up at last, and gazed
With searching inquest in that guardian face
’Neath which its leaves had opened one by one.
She said how glad she was that he should go !—
He started.—Then she smiled, and smoothed her
words,
And said how fuller glad her mind would be
To know him healed,—though even at distance know.

Then, plucking gently from a garden stem
A fragrant down-bowed lily of the vale,
She said—" 'Tis little, but the gift is sweet,"
And gave with open face and grace unguiled.
He did not take her hand ; but he *did* look
Into her face.—There was no blush there now ;
But the dead paleness of a great alarm.

To other lands he sailed. And there he died—
Or so 'twas said. The Hall was hung with black.
His body, it was told, would come by sea
To fill a grave within his native land.

The grave was made—and something laid therein.
Few weepers, so it seemed, were there to throw
The decent veil of seeming o'er his tomb.
'Twas clear none cared for him or for his dust ;—
Death had but sifted it, the gold remained.
He might have left it on the thither side
Of the great deep ; what cared those Norman maids ?
" One gone, another heir would come, and one,
'Twas hoped, more ready to the net than he !"

One eve—that hour when through the wood-shade
gloom

The dwarf Athenian owl goes hooting forth
To scare the milking maids, and the wan moon
Peers on the false records which men set up
On tombs, and laughs with sickly light
To note that none are constant save herself—
On such an eve, the twin gate-keeping maids
Stole forth through dewy grass to hold their tryst
Among the graves, with memories full fed.

The solemn hour was solemn but to one.
The Red Rose danced among the spangled graves
Dew-beaded. She was pranked her lovely best :
“ Whoever saw a ruddy rose in black ?
Blue dahlias scarce were stranger ! No, not she,
She would not hearse her beauty in the dark
For the best man that ever rode to death
Upon the spur of a despairing heart.
What was a greensward made for, even though graves
Should mar its smoothness, save for merry dance.”
So forth she waltzed ; and, circling fairy rings
Round all the graves, at length to distance danced.

But like a dew-bowed snowdrop, round whose pale
Pure head the blackened ashes have been piled,
The Christmas Rose, arrayed in memory’s robe,
Bent o’er the grave which held the all she knew
Of good and gracious in the now blank world.

While thus she leaned, one straying through the
ground—
’Twas he, the living lord of those fair lands—
Met far off her who danced among the tombs.
He looked ;—and sighed ; then rose his smothered
cry :—
“ Distance has distanced love ! Red Rose, farewell !
A long farewell to vanity and thee !”

Then, drawing nigh unto his own grave-side,
He stood in silence, like a spirit come
To visit where its soulless ashes lay.
There, raising up her constant head in tears,

And thinking 'twas his soul come back to her,
The Christmas Rose beheld him where he stood :
And, seeing how her thought took instant shape,
Her glad, sweet face she turned to him, and spoke.

“ I knew that thou wouldst come again to me ;
Or I ere this glad hour had gone to thee.
In dreams thou camest often : now thou com'st
Clothed in thy likeness dearer than a dream ;
For now I know a wish will bring thee back,
Though never wish would bring my dream again.
Ah ! move not from me : bide a little space,
That I may tell thee all my grateful heart.—
Yet, come not nearer, either : we are far
As earth and heaven, which mingle but in tears ;
And I should weep to touch thee, and the rain
Of heavy tears would shroud thee from my sight !”

What mortal man but had confessed his hope ?
What spirit but had raised that drooping flower
Which shed its wealth of sweetness on a grave ?
The sudden sweet conviction of her truth
Rushed through his heart ; and, with one forward
bound,
He sprang and clasped that blossom to his breast.

Fair in his princely halls his Christmas Rose
Bloomed midst the ivies ; with each Christmas tide
Fairer and fairer ; till his wonder woke
How any flower so fair could fairer grow.
The clear-eyed mistletoe was dun beside
The gladdened radiance of his Christmas Rose.

The red-lipped hollies laughed with ruddier light
To meet the glancing of the leaping flame :
But she was like the flower whose name she bore,
Which types to mortal man the soul of love ;
Which shines where all is dark, makes glad the grave,
And, with the snows around it, owns its lord,
And blooms beneath the heaven of his smile.



CHRISTMAS NIGHT MUSIC.

As I lie softly dreaming,
 Sweet sleep but a seeming ;
 With conscious veiled eyes
 Peering out where my lattice seems kissing the skies ;
 The wind-swayed poplars in night's full noon
 Fanning the moon ;
 The cedar tops swooping like eagles of prey
 Down on the weather-cock winged and grey ;
 Along by the lime walk and through the lodge gates,
 Hark ! slow wind the Waits.

Like a strange broken link,
 How broken we know not,
 From the chain of the joy-woven blossoms immortal,
 The blossoms we grow not ;
 Borne down by the sighs
 Of the sorrowful, tremulous winds as it flies
 Dropped in love from the brink
 Of the heavenly portal ;
 Like a rainbow, broad-arched spanning ocean and shore
 With its crown to the crown of the heavens evermore,
 Bringing tidings of peace home to every man's door,
 Music breathes of the skies.
 The airs may be hacknied, the words may seem small ;
 The soul can transmute them ; sweet fancy in all :
 That child of eternity saved from the Fall.

Earth to-night is transfigured, and holy the ground,
And the hour lends a rapture transcending the sound.
They sing of the "angels" "fair" ever and "bright,"
And, see! where Orion stands belted for fight,
Not for conquest, nor wealth, nor for fame, nor delight,
 But for victory won
 Over ill that is done
 In God's sight,
 Over the bars
Of the restless-eyed, heaven-tied, earth-denied stars
A star-angel floats down a ladder of light!
Like the moon when she glides down some sea-watered
 bay
 Where ripple and spray,
 With the shallows at play,
Dancing under and over the rock-ribbed way,
Kiss each ridge where her golden-laced sandals alight
When the soul of her coming turns midnight to day.

But, hush! They have changed to a song of the sea.
 It is night on the ocean,
 Dark night as may be,
 And a tender emotion
Steals over the wild waters clasped by the lea.
Forsaken of God lie the billows that rolled
'Neath the feet of the Stainless that walked them of old;
And the dream of her trouble disturbs the great deep
 Where her waves their time keep
 With a bound and a leap,
For I hear how the waters breathe hard in their sleep.

THE WAITS.

PAST the dying maiden's chamber, where the night-boughs
 wave at will,
 And the heart's cry is the louder that the voice of love is
 still ;
 Where hungry hope is starved to death and withers day
 by day,
 And silent faith can do no more but lift the hands and
 pray ;
 Solemn and sweet steals down the street to sounding harp
 and horn,
 " In death's despite, this blessed night is thy Redeemer
 born !"

Past the sacred domes of wedded homes whose hearths
 the angels keep,
 Where the plighted hands are mutely locked in the sweet
 unsevered sleep ;
 Under the towers, along the bowers, still hallowed by its
 gleam,
 Where, in their bright unsullied youth, love led them in
 a dream ;
 Hark ! where it rolls ! It thrills their souls : " Arise,
 and bend the knee ;
 HE comes, who blest the wedding-feast in Cana of
 Galilee !"

Past the noble house of charity, where beams of morning
 play
On eyes of sightless innocents that know not it is day ;
Whose ravished orbs are turned to heaven, how dark
 soe'er it be,
In the tender joy of faith that feels the love it cannot
 see ;
And the quickened ear drinks deep the sound, and the
 soul leaps to the eye :
“ Behold the light of all the world, the day-spring from
 on high ! ”

Past the lorn and houseless wanderer by the slimy river's
 brink,
Ere she springs beneath the glassy pool where all her
 sorrows sink ;
Till she dream she hears the voice of Him who walked
 the waters wide,
And the saving music dies not till her steps are turned
 aside.
It sighs to her, it cries to her, in the hour of her dismay :
“ Stood He not by Mary Magdalene when the stone was
 rolled away ? ”

Past by the branded sepulchres that whiten 'neath the
 moon ;
Past by the stony torture-cells washed by the black
 lagune ;
By felon graves, by robber caves, and dungeon's vaulted
 dome,
Sweeps on that triumph-strain that speaks a conqueror to
 come :

“ He comes not in the sounding blast, nor in the rolling
thunder,
But on the wings of mercy borne, to burst your bonds
asunder !”

More holy-tender swells the song, where, pure and
undefiled,
A mother, towards the reddening east, lifts up her new-
born child :

“ Give glory unto God this night, thrice blessèd as thou
art !

Like Mary, fast for ever keep His sayings in thy heart.
Hear thou the precious words of joy breathed by those
lips divine :

‘ Such as these are of my kingdom ’—‘ little children,’ like
to thine !”

Hark ! around the palace chambers—hark ! along the
palace walls,

Like the shouting of a conquering band, the strain of
triumph falls ;

As starts the monarch from his throne the armèd host to
meet,

Down drops the crown unto his knee, the purple to his
feet ;

Awe-struck, he veils his humbled brow, while loud the
anthem rings :

“ Glory, glory in the highest, unto Him, the King of
kings !”

THE INSPIRATION OF CAEDMON.

A RECORD OF OUR FIRST ANGLO-SAXON POET.

“Nu we sceolan herian
heofon-rices weard,
metodes mihte,
and his mod-ge-thone,
wera wuldor faeder.”*

CAEDMON'S SONG OF THE CREATION.

THE hour was that most glorious eve of Christ.
The feast was spread. The holly's coral seeds
Wreathed red the wine-cup. High o'er arching roof,
And portal capped with antlers of the deer,
The sun-born mistletoe translucent shone
With berries, dropping like sad angels' tears
As waxed the revelry more fierce and loud,
Unfitting that great advent of our Lord.

From guest to guest passed swift the trembling harp.
Rough hands of riot minstrels flushed with grape
Shook the strained chords till all the music reeled,
And fell, dead-pausing, with a shuddering close,
Like to that demon wail which swells the breeze
Rude-ruffling funeral harps on yew-boughs hung
Above the burial mounds of slaughtered kings.

Wilder and wilder grew the rout. Glib tongues
Woke evil strains. And graceless was the hand
Which flung the conscious harp to Caedmon's knee.

* “Now we shall praise the guardian of heaven, the might of the Creator, and his counsel, the glory-father of men.”

Shaking, he rose. The shattered harp, o'erthrown,
Rang with a horror-peal that thrilled the roof.
He strove for speech. But the dumb words came not.
The holy passion stirring as a god
Within him, found no chain of silver sound
To bind the brutish herd. So, filled with shame
All crimson to the brow, he strode apart,
And, weeping, left that hall of licence rude.

As fitting place for one of humble gifts,
Among the tongue-mute beasts within a stall
He cast him down. Blest visions found him there,
Amid God's lowliest creatures. Such the spot
Where Mary-mother laid her burthen pure,
Cradled on barren straws which bloomed anew
To greet the coming of the Bread of Life.

He slept: when, rising soft as vapours rise
To meet the cloud-dispersing kiss of heaven,
There floated mid the bearded ears around
That dropped their seed in worship at his feet,
A seraph form, snow-winged and amber-haired,
With voice more sweet than voice of fluted morn
Waking new life among the reeded blooms.

"All hail!" it cried; "All hail! Most blessed, thou!
Pure midst the sinning! Mute where all were loud,
Most voiceful shalt thou rise when all are dumb.
Yon breakers of the Sabbath-rest of God
New laid within the cradle of this world
Lie bowed, beast-like, upon the hateful floor
Drowned in the fumes of revel. Rise thou up,
And straight a-foot return, thy God with thee:

Wake up what wine has left of soul to wake
In those drowned sleepers. Take thy voice once more,
That dumbly fled thee in that hour of shame.
Go forth undoubting. Speak what in thee works,
Even as a dying man to dying men."

Caedmon awoke. The late deep gloom of night
Hovering unsteady mid the rolling spheres,
Slipt sudden off and left a twofold day—
A daylight starred. Swift rose he at the hest
Of that seraphic vision, filled with strength ;
And took his way unto the hall of feast.

No maddening furor, such as moved of old
The heathen voice prophetic but of war,
Moved him who knelt to sing of Christ new-born.
Peace shone around him as a circling moon
Chasing the black earth-shadows. From the ground
He raised the silent harp ; and, stringing new
The brassy chords, sent forth a voice of power
Above the wine-slain herd.

Slow rolled the hymn
Unto the great Creator ! Solemn-sweet,
And potent as the song the angels sing
To drown men's curses, that they reach not heaven.

As closed the strain, the seeming-dead awoke
From out their bestial slumbers. Haggard eyes
Glared up in wonder where dumb Caedmon knelt
Steept to the lips in song ; with face transformed
Even to the beauty of a face divine,
Made radiant by the glory from within.

Awe-struck, they rose. Then prostrate fell once more,
Each knee low bent to hail Christ's holy dawn,
Which burst through port and lattice, like a god
That will not be denied.

His mission done,
With silent thanks upon his lighted lip
Went Caedmon forth, and lifted face to heaven ;
As one who, dreaming, sees rich wonders, hid
From eyes of common mould. Still tranced in soul,
He bent his way unto a house of prayer :
There, nigh to pious Hilda, heaven-devote,
Dwelt aye in perfect peace and joy divine
Beside the fair white sands of Streonshalch,*
His glorious gift unsullied to the last.

* Whitby.



A CHRISTMAS DREAM.

A PILGRIM to the West returned, whose palm-branch,
 drenched in dew,
 Shook off bright drops like childhood's tears when child-
 hood's heart is new,
 Stole up the hills at eventide, like mist in wintry weather,
 Where locked in dream-like trance I lay, at rest among
 the heather.

The red ferns, answering to his tread, sent up a savour
 sweet ;
 The yellow gorse, like Magian gold, glowed bright about
 his feet :
 The waving brooms, the winter blooms, each happy
 voice in air,
 Grew great with life and melody, as if a Christ stood
 there.

Unlike to mortal man was he. His brow rose broad and
 high :
 The peace of Heaven was on his lip, the God-light in
 his eye ;
 And rayed with richer glory streamed, through night
 and darkness shed,
 To crown that holy Pilgrim's brow, the one star over-
 head.

Long gazing on that staff he bore, beholding how it grew,
With sprouts of green, with buds between, and young
leaves ever new,
The marvels of the Eastern Land I bade him all unfold,
And thus to my impassioned ear the wondrous tale he
told !

“ Each growth upon that sacred soil where One died not
in vain,
Though crushed and shed, though seeming dead, in
beauty lives again :
The branching bough the knife may cleave, the root the
axe may sever,
But on the ground His presence lighted, nothing dies for
ever.

“ Where once amid the lowly stalls fell soft the Virgin’s
tear,
The littered straw ’neath children’s feet turns to green
wheat in ear.
The corn He plucked on Sabbath days, though ne’er it
feel the Sun,
Though millions since have trod the field, bears fruit for
every one.

“ The palms that on His way were strewn wave ever in
the air,
From cloudy earth to sun-bright heaven they form a
leafy stair.
In Cana’s bowers the love of man is touched by the
Divine ;
And snows that fall on Galilee have still the taste of
wine.

“Where thy lost locks, poor Magdalen ! around His feet
were rolled,
Still springs in woman’s worship-ways the gracious Mary-
gold.
Men know, when o’er that bowed-down head they hear
the angels weeping,
The purer spirit is not dead—not dead, but only sleeping.

“Aloft on blackened Calvary no more the shadows
lour :
Where fell the piercing crown of thorns there blooms a
thorn in flower.
Bright on the prickled holy-tree and mistletoe appear,
Reflecting rays of heavenly shine, the blood-drop and
the tear.

“The sounding rocks that knew His tread wake up each
dead abyss,
Where echoes caught from higher worlds ring gloriously
in this :
And, leaning where His voice once filled the Temple
where He taught,
The listener’s eyes grow spirit-full—full with a heavenly
thought.”

The Pilgrim ceased. My heart beat fast. I marked a
change of hue,
As if those more than mortal eyes a soul from God looked
through.
Then rising slow, as angels rise, and soaring faint far
far,
He passed my bound of vision, robed in glory, as a star

Strange herald-voices filled the air : glad anthems swelled
around :

The wakened winds rose eager-toned, then lapsed in
dreamy sound.

It seemed all birds that wintered far, drawn home by
some blest power,

Made music in the Christmas woods, mistaking of the
hour.

A new glad spirit raptured me ! I woke to breathe the
morn

With heart fresh strung to charity—as though a Christ
were born.

Then knew I how each earth-born thought, though
tombd in clay it seem,

It bursts the sod, it soars to God, transfigured in a dream.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I.

COME forth ye wondering children all, come forth from
wood and wild,
And let us sing the days of Christ, when He was but a
child.

When He was but a little child, as tender as might be ;
That blessed night pale Mary came from distant
Galilee.

That night, when 'mid the cattle herd, pure as the snow
that falls,
The voice that breathed our Father's love was hushed
among the stalls.

It was the dreary winter-tide, and dark the hour He
came ;
But such a brightness round Him burned, the east was
all a-flame.

He made a wonder where He lay ; quickened with love
and fear,
The barren straw did swell with grain ripe in the fruitful
ear.

All round the shed the frozen bees went singing, singing
sweet ;
The lowly herd, bowed down with awe, fell kneeling at
His feet.

And Mary, on her sleeping Son, in solemn gladness
smiled ;
Remember ! 'twas the sacred time when Christ was but
a child.

II.

He came to show the waters pure, where thirsting souls
might sip ;
The Bread of Life was on His tongue, its wine upon
His lip.

The sages cast before His feet their jewels—costly rare ;
Those feet which late had trod the skies, where all His
riches were.

They held a crown above His head, with gems all bristled
o'er ;
It might have been a crown of thorns that pressed and
pierced Him sore.

It stirred Him from His slumbers calm ; a change passed
o'er His sleep ;
Though yet no healing word He spoke, His sighs came
loud and deep.

And ever on His heaving breast, by troubled visions
tossed ;
Still folded in a mystic sign, His tender arms He crossed.

Though Mary-mother undid the clasp, her care it was
but loss ;
For still the silent sleeper's arms would form that mystic
cross.

It might not be a thing of chance, nor empty vision
wild ;
Remember ! 'twas the wondrous time when Christ was
but a child.

III.

The daylight dawned, and Jesus woke, and gazed upon
His mother ;
Then, searching wide with anxious eyes, He seemed to
seek Another.

He might not weep as children weep ; but, on her bosom
leaning,
With speaking looks He clung to her—with looks of
mournful meaning.

His lips, at her half-uttered prayer, were moved, but
made no moan ;
Her holy eyes upturned to heaven, He followed with
His own.

And steps came in, and steps went out, that passed not
by the door ;

And a dreary shadow stole along, and fell upon the floor.

And a voice, like that on Calvary, rang through the
frozen air,

In the anguish of the Crucified,—the passion, and the
prayer !

Then slow the wintry winds died down ; hushed was
the herd's low bleating ;

No sound was heard in that lone shed, only their two
hearts beating.

So found He safety on the breast of Mary-mother mild ;
Remember ! 'twas the hallowed time when Christ was
but a child.



MALCOLM AND MARGARET.

A RECORD OF SENLAC.

“Swa thin sunu mære,
 Thruh clæne gecynd,
 Cyninc ofer calle,
 Beald gebletsod.”*

ANGLO-SAXON POEM.

SENLAC was fought. On St. Calixtus' day
 The Norman Conqueror wrote his name in blood.
 Where now the wild sea-pink its crown of bloom
 Wears safe among the wastes of Peven's shore,
 The golden circlet slipped from Harold's brow.

Ere yet the anchorites of Waltham groped
 Trembling along the field of that red day :
 Ere yet the wrung hands of the mother rose
 With cries to the dumb heavens for a son :
 Ere Edith's form, forlorn among the dead,
 Drooped o'er the unmistakable face of love
 White as a white swan by a sedgy stream
 That bears a self-slain lover on its tide :
 Three fugitives sought swift the Northern Sea.
 Edgar the Atheling ; with the widowed wife
 Of Edward of the stalwart Ironside's race,
 His bowed Hungarian mother ; and the pearl

* “So thy great son, through his pure nature, king over all, hath
 blessed the constant.”

OF the old Saxon crown, pale Margaret,
The love of Malcolm, whom she loved no more
Than court-bred princess loves the unkemp kern.

But that great Northern Sea, lashed quick to wrath,
As if the tempest of the tides of men
New met to struggle on the late calm shore
Had borne its trouble even beyond the land,
Rolled vexed with foam. The strong ship, manned in
haste,

Her sails all set by quivering hands, the winds
Took by surprise. To distant Hungary bound,
Back veered the fluttering canvas. Past control,
O'er the mad waters flew the destined ship
Towards that great Forth that, with its frere the Tay,
Half isles the wooded shores of regal Fife.

Wrecked on that shore :—twice wrecked, in life and
hope :

Cast at the mercy both of floods and men :
A prize to any traitor who should seek
Gold of the Norman for this Saxon heir,
This princely Atheling ; driven on Alpin wilds ;
Caught in the bitter tangled sea-weeds toils,
A new-chained waif of the waters, to whose side
The pearl-white flower of England, and the weed
Which blossomed once on fields of Hungary,
Clung drooping like sweet vines about their staff ;
Stood Edgar to the buffet of the storm.

But Margaret, lifting up wan face serene
From 'neath those locks wherein the sparkles hid
Of salt sea-crystals which the new-spring sun

Flashed into sudden light as a starred crown
Of living gems, breathed comfort, peril-sweet.

“Fear not, my brother. Nay, nor tremble thou,
Sweet mother, exiled on this alien bar.
Malcolm is generous. He will not yield
Brother of mine, nor mother, neither me,
His one-time love so cruel to his hope,
To the more cruel conqueror of our race.
Him will I seek, and in his royal hold
Entreat for succour.”

Something in her face
Of that old dauntless spirit of her sires
Stirred them to hear her. And ere hand could stay
The moving purpose confidently held,
She, slipping from the clinging close embrace
Of loving arms that captured her in bond,
Took sole her way to those broad-belted towers
Of vast Dunfermline, the embattled hold,
Of rough unlettered Malcolm ; suitor once
For that sweet smile now lost on lips of pearl.

Flung at his feet, the beauty of his dreams
Rough Malcolm saw, and trembled ; struck with fear
Of all her fears.

Quick starting up, all fire,
He blew an instant summons on the horn
That swung before his baldric.

“Up my men !”

He cried, as round him drew those Northern stars
Which studded thick his throne. “Up, up, great hearts !

A prize is cast upon our shore : The King
O' the braw Saxon race. Make capture o' him, quick ;
He is a spoil for heroes ! This white pearl,
Here at my feet, dropped from his father's crown,
Must swift be set among his gems once more.
(We seize no hostage—herald least of all.)
Nay, I am with ye ! Was I ever last ?

“ For thee, maid-herald, fitter time shall come
For greeting. Trust, right loyal is the heart
That in this outside roughness of a man
Beats with the murdered Duncan's blood. Thy land,
And all it holds, is mine.—Would God it were,
As truly as I speak it ; then wert thou
Mine, too—mine all ! One word. Thou ow'st me
nought.

Remember that. Condition make I none.

“ Now forth, my heather-troopers ! to the wreck
O' a King ; and from yon broken timbers rear
Once more a gallant craft shall ride the seas
To land—the land his fathers won and wore ! ”

Bewildered by the sudden rush of joy,
The eyes of Margaret followed Malcolm's form
Quick girt with weapons and with warlike gear ;
And fronting all her perils, and the perils
Of all her royal house, with such a front
As heroes wear : till o'er her eyes a mist
Came stealing, like the wreath on Lomond's crest.
Rough welcome of the north !—but warm as rough.
It came like storms that come in time of drowth,
Leaving the light of rainbows in its track.

Brief wooing—sweet as brief—was Malcolm's now.
Her heart flew out to meet him, as a bird
That knows its captor. Of his wildest hope
She answered the sweet call : and, ere the dew
Of tears was shaken from her plumes, dropped soft,
Folding her wings of freedom on his breast.

Brief as the wooing was the wedded joy.
Stealthy as shadow o'er the dial moves,
A silent cloud was stealing o'er a life.
Malcolm, with royal soul, less doubting her
Than his rough power to compass such a prize,
Grew moody ; stole apart ; and, musing, turned
His mateless steps to a great Druid grove
Whose shadows foiled the shadows of his grief.

" I am not worthy her," was still his cry.
" In vain her sweet eyes unto mine she lifts
With the glad light of duty. Vainly more,
With small white hand she smooths my ruffled brow,
And seals that kiss—great God ! why do I stand
A traitor here,—a traitor black to her—
That took her in her grateful hour, a spoil,
A slave, a captive ? Nay, she shall be free.
Some lost love sways her still. Else why, each eve,
Steals she, all muffled, into yonder cave ?
Some innocent parting with some once child-love ?
It must be so. Then, what if I were dust ?
Why, then her choice were free.

" Can I be wrong ?

Has the rank jealousy of graceless man
Belied her ?—Curses on my evil tongue !—
And yet 'tis natural. It must be love."

What else could lead her, secret even from me,
To dare the darksome horrors of a cave
Wherein no sunshine save her presence steals ?

“ What of that other ? Say he be a man ;
Can manhood wear the garland of her smiles
And not grow drunk with honey of the boughs ?
Perchance she weeps ; and from her tears he gleans
That soft relenting farthest from her soul ?
And I mope here, a coward fool whose foot
Dares not to follow though her peril cries
And calls me to the rescue.”

As he spoke,
Moved by a sudden impulse, deep he dived
Down by a wild wood-path whence, serried, rose
A double column of great northern pines,
Wherein of sun-born odours dead at eve
A lingering soul of sweetness seemed to lurk.

Down the steep stairway of the soil-bare roots
Went Malcolm. From his martial tread the sound
Fell sleeping on the scattered spines, new-shed,
That strewed the muffled floor-ways of the wood ;
A fitting bed for rest of royal heel
Among the drowsy Caledonian wilds.

So, coming to an inland cave, whose mouth,
With stalactite and stalagmite thick-set,
Gaped, a huge dragon-mouth with dragon-teeth,
Down whose far depths a single point of fire
Raged through the darkness, paused the broken king,
Half daunted by his purpose. When a voice,

Whose music was the music of his soul,
Dropped its sweet notes like lulling waters dropped
With frequent fall upon a rock-fast floor.

“Hear me, Great Father! Not to me alone
Send Thou those glorious truths by which I live.
Bless Thou my Malcolm with Thy guiding light!
Take from him, if Thou wilt, his kingly state.
Send him foot-bare along the world’s rough ways,
Me with him, to the rude ends of the earth,
If so, long-wandering, he may find Thee there.

“Or dare I ask—for so he loves his land,
Death would steal near him on a stranger shore—
Here, by his side, upon his father’s throne,
To die, and live a spirit at his hand,
To whisper to his inmost soul Thy love
In words that not prevail in this flesh bound?

“Or grant me more of love—if more can be.
The greatness of Thy love can compass all.
But mine is weak: it must be, since in vain
It strives, and finds no issue to its hope.

“Or is my love too earthly? O my God!
Is it thy will that we should part our lives
That are so closely folded, heart to heart?
Gives he too much of his great soul to me?
Why then to thee I yield him, O Lord Christ!
But not unto another—Christ!—Lord!—Christ!
Oh, not unto another!”

Quick, a cry
Broke out amid the shadows of the cave;

A woman's cry of wonder ; echoed back
From roof and God-wrought pillar.

Step by step,
With eager tread 'twas agony to curb,
Had Malcolm paced the darkness ; drank each word
As 'twere a mead-cup ; caught at broken spars
To keep his dizzy brain from reeling round
In the wild whirl of rapture and surprise :
And, last, quickly-turning towards a half-hid shrine
Dim-lighted by a glow-worm from the woods,
Whereby a muffled form knelt prone and prayed,
Sprang to her ; caught her to his great true breast ;
Heaped kiss on raptured kiss ; till both their souls
Swooned with that holy madness of the heart
Which frantic acolytes can match no more
Than a blank cave find issue at God's gate.

And evermore from that blest hour the winds,
That paused in awe before that cavern's mouth
To whisper of the wonders held within,
Pined out and died with envy. Breath of theirs
Stirred not the tapers, beautifully turned
In swayless stillness on the dead Christ-face :
Lighting the sorrows of the soul of man,
Raying the crown that kinged a God, new slain.

Adornment else was none. It was a shrine
Devote to heaven for a gift, new-won :
A place of pilgrimage for two fixed hearts :
A temple set apart to that divine
And all unfathomable soul of love
Whose great embrace enfolds two worlds in one.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

O GOODLY Christmas Tree !
 From whose green heights depending,
 The sacred gifts of love we see :
 Thy torch-light flames like glow-worm lamps are blending
 Amidst those boughs whose pious lading
 The light-winged hour has driven :
 The small bells 'neath thine arches ringing,
 That nod in music to their leafy shading,
 Thy tiny censers slowly swinging,
 Sound and breath up to Heaven !

Beautiful art thou in thy dainty trimming,
 Thy quaint devices strange :
 Magnetic fishes in the broad air swimming,
 And birds with wings of scanty range ;
 Arrows that poison not, nor wound,
 And harps by love's own fingers tuned ;
 Blithe mummers meet for fairy hall,
 Trumpets for elfin call,
 Wild stags through forest boughs their antlers rearing,
 Hounds swiftly chasing, and bold steeds careering.

On that blest Eve when the banned witch is scared,
 And the stalled ox goes down upon his knee,
 When youth and maid have to the dance repaired,
 Children shall gather round the Christmas Tree,

And with sweet upward gaze,
Lost 'mid the leafy maze,
Stand rapt in mute delight;
Or rend the still air of hallowed night,
Hailing with infant voice the world's new prime—
Innocent laughter, holy as the Time!

Man, with the silvered locks,
Standing 'midst these white flocks,
Blessing Christ's eve with bent and humbled brow,
Lay at these children's feet
Gifts beautiful and meet,
That love and gratitude from joy may grow!
So shall each toy, thrice hallowed by the hour,
Touch the deep heart of childhood in its spring;
And thine shall be to each unsullied flower
The wise man's offering.

Thou, darling, in whose cheek
The Soul begins to speak,
Lie down, soft dreaming of thy Christmas Tree!
And may its branches to thy vision be
Like guardian wings in love outspreading,
Where angel guests are threading
The leafy depths whose hoarded treasures seem
Like flowers new cropped,
Which God hath dropped,
To make thy life one summer dream.

Woman! in whose deep eyes
The holy aspect lies
Of glorious motherhood, unstained of earth,
Breathe o'er each sleeper's rest,
The words Christ's lips have blessed.

O guide them heavenward from their first life-birth !
And, though they should requite
Thee, like thy gifts to-night,
Slighting the heart that breaketh with their fall,
Still in thine arms uplift them unto God's great call !



THE COMING OF CHRIST.

I.

HE cometh ! Like a dawn delayed,
 When rolling mists, the earth surrounding,
 Too long retard the gracious sun's abounding.
 He cometh ! Through the clouds that shade
 A world for peace, and love, and gladness made :
 A world whose silent chords await His finger's holy
 sounding !

II.

His love doth fall upon the soul
 Like silent droppings of quick tears
 Amid the sobbings which God only hears !
 It bids the shattered heart be whole,
 And hope no more drop fainting at the goal
 When life itself sinks deafened by the rushing tramp of
 years.

III.

Where His mild wand the hours doth number,
 Where His right hand the way doth keep,
 Death's but the falling of the lids in sleep,
 Life but a robe whose folds encumber,
 And Memory's failure only the soft slumber—
 The dreamy trance of angels—silent, beautiful, and deep !



THE NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.



The New Year's Gifts.

THE LOOP OF PEARLS.

A LADY, resting in her garden bower,
Had dozed away that idle hour between
The toilet's labours and the evening's rout.
She was not beautiful : she was not young.
What most she lacked was that rare grace of mind
To see 'twas time to rest beneath the shade
Of her declining summers, matron-wise.
The ravages of time were palpable.
Her eyes were rayless ; save that round their rims,
As shot from suns down-sunk in clouds of eve,
O'er her once heavenly cheek the wrinkles rayed.
No cap confined her tresses in their flow.
But, darkly streaked like barks of weeping birch,
And silvered like their silver, with the touch
Of years no soul about her dared to count,
Her locks were bondaged in a loop of pearls !

The pearls were pearls of price, such once as shone
Beneath the waves of old Caer Arvon's shore,
The British " perlyns " of our ancestors :
Or such as pay the diver's toil who braves

Dread monsters of the sea on far-off coasts
Of Coromandel. Better in the deep
Their beauty had lain hid. A mockery here,
They looked like lights of life pale burning out ;
Cold as snow-berries shrunk within themselves
With shivering terror of the wintering year,
Or gracious dews of morning, fixed and dead.

Now very drowsy was my lady, loth
To quit her snug siesta 'neath the Ash.
Yet pleasure—she termed “ duty ”—called her forth
By a sweet voice. 'Twas that of a young girl
Of her adoption : “ A poor low-born thing,”
She had been heard to say ; “ but useful—very.”
So, Miriam, having duly called her, turned
To follow on the lady's steps. But she,
Waving her regal hand, bade her remain,
And pluck away the slugs from the slimed twigs.

But scarcely had she moved three homeward steps
Ere something told her that her loop of pearls
Had dropped the while she slept : for all her hair
Lay loose.—Quick turned she back, and sudden cried,
“ Miriam, give me my pearls ; on yonder bench
They needs must lie.” But Miriam searched in vain.
The lady watched. Then, seeing her distressed ;
Her young hands trembling like the poplar leaves
That wore their whiteness inward like herself ;
Gave sudden entrance to an evil thought.
“ The pearls lie there—or did, until you came.”

With sad, vague eyes that looked beyond the bower
In dread of something sweet beyond the bower

And ready steps that would have fled the bower,
The child—she scarce was more—turned soft and said:—
“Madam, I see not—nay, nor have I seen—”
“Why tremble, thus?” “Dear Madam, on my knees—”
“You do confess it, then?” “Alas, alas !
Oh ! blame no other—blame none else but me.”

In more disorder now, the lady's locks,
Shook by her passion, rolled unheeded down.
Her hand was on the bell that from the bower
On winding wires conducted to the hall :
When, facing her, with a slight start, as one
Caught unaware—there stood my lady's son !

“Here is a pretty end,” she cried, “of all
Your constant spoiling of this evil child !
This comes of all your luting and your fluting ;
Your poets, and your pastimes out of doors.
She must have pearls, foorsooth, wherewith to crown
A beggar ! For a beggar to my door
She came : a beggar shall she quit it, quick.”

But “soft !” cried Ernest, “soft, good mother, soft !”
And, gently seizing on her arm, to stay
Her quick impetuous movement of retreat,
He pointed to a skirting sweep of lawn.
There, out upon the greensward, full in view,
Grave as a judge, and wanting but the wig ;
Black as a negro, sober, quaint, and grim,
Save for a loop of pearls about his neck,
(He there had flung as he had flung the worms
Impatient from his beak when they refused

Without a strife to quit their earthy bed
To fill his cormorant maw) a jackdaw hopped.

Plucking them deftly from his favourite bird,
He laid them silent, in his mother's hand.
And then he spoke.

“Mother, the days are gone
For silence and for fear.—Yon bowed-down head,
Can you look on it, and not own a tear?
(As for your momentary baseless thought,
See, all her own are wide? she guessed it not,
And never shall she know the truth from me.)
Miriam, look up!—Mother, last night my love
Was all confessed; and Miriam I implored
To meet me here, to take anew my vow—
Here, where I found her seeking you, not me.
She said she loved me not; refused to meet
My mother's son in secret and alone.
I do believe she loves me ne'ertheless.
But tender duty, fear to break the bond
Of older love—more sacred scarce than mine
For her—subdues her sweet soul to revolt
Against itself.

Mother, your eyes grow fierce.
My fixed resolve I've told: to win her mine,
If love of mine can win her. Take her hand,
I do implore you. Daughter will she prove;
Never was sweeter daughter to a mother.

You look as you could slay me. Yet awhile
Hear me with patience. I would fain have won

Your full approval ; won it on the ground
Of her dear worth alone.—Nay, I will wait
Till kinder thoughts shall move you.”

“Move me not
To utter words shall part us ! Never more,
If you be son of mine, dare to repeat——”

“Why, then it must be now.—Miriam, your hand.
You will not give it ? Well, then, I must yield.
But yet before we three must part for aye,
A story have I which shall make the world
More fair for one whose sweet face is most fair
To me behind its veil of sorrow worn
And poverty unmerited.

One day,
While climbing, boy-like, to yon jackdaw’s nest
I stumbled ; loosed my holding ; and so fell
Some half way down along this Ash-tree’s boll.
Into a hollow slipping with one foot,
My heel struck sudden with metallic ring
Upon an iron casket hid within
The Ash-tree’s hollow. Open flew the lid—
For I had hit it sharply on the worn
And rusted hasp—and out there rolled a scroll
All duly signed and sealed ; its substance this,
Fair-written in my uncle’s well-known hand.

Discarded early from his father’s house,
An alien to his only brother’s heart,
A homeless fugitive, he took his way

To Eastern lands : there wooed to love, and won,
A lovely Jewess, Miriam her name.
There died he, and beneath a shadeless palm
Lay buried (this, another hand had writ
Upon the margin). Then the Jewish wife
Like to another Hagar wandered wild,
A little woman-Ishmael at her knee.

Mother your heart was full of pity once.
The dying mother, 'neath this Ash-tree laid,
While breathing her last breath 'twixt life and death,
In speechful silence gave into your arms
This child of love, my dusk-browed Miriam.
Look on her ; scorn her, hate her if you can.
She is my cousin, and my uncle's daughter.
She is my chosen wife ; my one sole love :
All I have ever known of sweet and fair,
Since in your fairer youth your soul was fair,
And I, your one young son, brought tears to you,
And love, and tender confidence, and hope—
Hope in all goodness where your spirit moved.

You answer nothing. What am I to think ?
If e'er you dreamed that I have taught this child
To wear my colours and to cast down yours,
And war against you, making peace with me,
You find your error now. She chooses you :
Me she discards.—Take with her, then, the rest ;
My father's lands and wealth. I stand alone.
For never more shall hateful sight of me
Cross path of hers or yours while life shall last."

Now, while the youth was speaking, bruised and sore,
Vexed thoughts were seething in the lady's mind.
Her one supremest trouble seemed to be
How to retreat with honour and with grace.
The field was lost, she could not well deny.
Her son she loved, as only mothers love.
Miriam, she well believed, was pure as fair;
And her old heart reproached her for the girl.
But then—she ne'er was in such strait before.
'Twas trying—bitter—cruel—and a shame!
She could have dashed her head against the Ash,
And closed all with a flourish.—Did she so?
She did—O dear no; nothing of the kind.

Her hands, which had been busy with the pearls,
Slow o'er the young girl's ringlets drew the pearls,
Till all the dusky locks were ringed with pearls.
You would have deemed a Peri* host had played
At stringing snow-balls in a cedar's shade
Within the purlieu of some Eastern glade;
Or dusky night had dimpled into stars
Out in the milky way.—'Twas passing fair.
So passing fair the lady thought the sight,
That, turning quickly lest rash envy's sprite
Should rush between her and her better self,
She would have moved away. But ere she moved,
A wakened thought of tenderness stole in,
Of one who, dead and gone, had twined that string
Of sea-stars on the cloud of her young hair
When it rolled dark as Miriam's.—So, all pale,

* The words Peri and Fairy are one.

But with a grace of heart that made her young
Even in the shadow of her ample years,
She took the glad-bowed Miriam in her arms,
And laid her on the bosom of her son :
Then clasped her hand in her son's hand—and wept.



HYMN TO THE NEW YEAR.

SPIRIT—yet child of earth ! Half-robed in snow
 Thou com'st, thy white wings ruffled in the wind.
 How, mother-like, we wearied for thy voice !
 Spanning the bridge of darkness with a bound,
 Our souls leaped forth to meet thee on thy way :
 Now, in the fulness of the perfect time,
 Clasped in the Old Year's fatherhood of love
 Lie all our weeping days : and thou art here,
 Heaven-born into the world without a cry !

Gracious, and pure ! Fresh from the touch of God,
 In all thine aspects beautiful art thou !
 Whether the frosted stars or icy moon
 Glance at thee sidelong ; or the joyous sun,
 Speeding to hail thee from the opening East,
 Shine on the young face looking to the dawn—
 Lovely in all ! To feel thee is a Prayer.
 Life's in thy breath, and heaven in thy smile ;
 And sorrow dies around thee—like the night.

We clasp—we hold thee ! Every grateful sense
 And every faltering motion of the lip
 Cries out to bless thee. Yet, a little while,
 And thou shalt melt into the fading prime :
 Thy place shall know thee never more ; but, snapt,

Like some fine chord of music in the soul,
Thy thread of life shall drop. Yet mourn not we,
For at the sacred pause of thy dear breath
The songs of angels drown the sobbing world ;
And when thou'rt led to thine appointed rest
To meet the long-extinguished race of days,
From thy dead dust the living Christ upsprings.

Hark—hark the strain ! Quick at thine onward tread
Rings out a solemn cadence of sweet sound,
Poured from each ancient belfry, full and deep,
Voiced round thee like a breeze ! 'Twould almost seem
Those rays thou wearest as a crown were born
Of His great glory who but now did rise
From out a dead year's ashes : those same bells
Which heralded His coming, scarce had stilled
Their hallowed music, ere thine advent woke
Through every thrilling tongue a new accord !—
So be it, gracious God ! So touch our days
That all their goodly cycle shall rise, crowned,
Rich with Thy glory ; and to these our souls,
With each lost year send Thou the patient Christ !



THE GIFT OF CLUNNOG VAWR.

A TALE OF CAER ARVON.

“Christ that of perfection is well.”—CHAUCER.

WHEN he who raised the pile of Clunnog Vawr*
 Taught pale-browed Winifred beside the well,
 He told this tale of Arvon. Oft the maid,
 Sitting at noon beside the well's green marge,
 Musing her maiden holy dreams apart,
 Trilled it in music; sang it to the drip
 Of dropping tears, dropped haply in the clear
 Hushed waters silvering in the sun; and sent
 A gush of melody entranced and sweet
 That ran and circled round the well's bright rim
 Till all the waters wrinkled with the rush
 Of music-breath: as one, with finger dipped,
 Courses the ringed rim of a music-glass,
 Till all the waters are astir with tune
 And tremble at the magic of the touch.

By Snowdon's woods, where Arvon's city towers—
 “City of Arvon,” on the Angle's sea
 Whose waters once were pearled like Oman's waves—
 Beside a spring that wove a silver thread
 Linking the clear bead-bubbles through the grass,
 A woman knelt and prayed unto the fount.

* St. Beunor.

"Oh living waters from the mountain poured,
That guard this stony wilderness of life,
Send from your deeps the everlasting voice!"

But dumb as death the everlasting voice
Of God, that spoke not from the heathen's well.
Then shrank her hope within her, as a seed
Shrinks in the pod when that its time is near
Ere yet it lifts its head, a flower, to Heaven.

Beunor, priest-master, of the ground, stood by
And, silent, watched her for a lengthened space.

Feeling a presence—as we know and feel,
Without the knowledge born of mortal sight,
When spirits greater than our own stand by—
The woman rose; and with her hair swept off
Those drops that filled the fountains of her eyes.

"What ill is thine?" asked Beunor. "Speak and tell—
Weep'st thou a husband dead, or lover lost?"
"I have a little son," she said,—“but one :
His sire lies widowed underneath the grass.
This land, his heritage but yestersun,
Is Beunor's now, the priest of the new faith ;
Cavan, the king, hath gifted it away.”

"That must be seen to ;—quickly, too. Here rest
Till I shall come to thee." Then forth he fared,
And straightway sought King Cavan on his throne.
Cried Beunor, "Sire, it pleaseth you to give
The orphan's portion to the Lord of Hosts.
King, He will none of it !"

“How now, Sir Priest !
To thee, His servant, ’twas, I gave the gift.”

“That which is given I hold in charge for Him.
I am His almoner : no cut-purse I.
Give back the land unto the rightful heir ;
Thy Master wills it.”

“Go, then, barefoot thou ;
For not alone this land do I recall,
But here I strip thee of all goods thou ownest,
Too lavish lent to one so bold of tongue !”

“To Arvon’s city did I walk barefoot :
From Arvon’s city can I so return.”
So, tightening the rough cord about his loins,
Forth stalked the “Iron Brow.”

But sudden-soon.
Ere yet the blessing winds had cooled his heat,
Came hurried footsteps pressing on his heels.

It was the young Cadwallon, with a face
Like to the angels wear when likest youth—
And youth is ever angel to the old.

“Well named, thou ‘Iron Brow !’ Cadwallon cried.
“Teacher and friend, not so shalt thou depart !
Take thou the sum of all the land I own,
My principedom and my birthright told in one,
From sea-girt Powis even to Clunnog Vawr,
Or barefoot will I walk the world with thee !”

So soft a cloud swept o’er the “Iron Brow,”
You would have deemed he was a child again.

Such heaven-rained drops came trickling to his eyes,
She at the spring might well have prayed by them
To God, the fountain-head of all such tears,
The source of all such waters of such wells
Sent down to us, drawn up to Him again,
Again to drop to us in heaven-sent showers
Making this bright world brighter for their sheen.

Then rose the noblest strife was ever strove,
Where two contended and where neither won.
No battle this betwixt the strong and weak,
For each was strong by force of God-got strength ;
And Heaven smiled down upon the bloodless strife
Where, roused to noble passion, self was slain.

While yet the twain contended, came a third—
Cavan, the king.

His royal heart burst forth :—

“ Oh, loyal subject ! And oh, loyal son !
My Ethel’s heavenly form I trace in thee
When first she raised the cross before my eyes.
Beunor,—strong heart ! I tried thee but to prove
If that the Christ was of thy lip or soul.
The land is thine to give. The child shall have
His heathen father’s heritage again.
For thee, take thou the gift of Clunnog Vawr ;
So rob this noble boy, who well may spare
A few broad roods. No answer, man, I say !
Cadwallon rules us here. The gift is his,
And free bestowed. So take and thank the Lord.”

While yet the woman wept beside the well
Her little son came running to her knee,

As he had run a foot-race 'gainst the wind,
And two red roses to his cheeks had flown,
To kiss him for the joyous news he brought ;
And told her all the tale that he had heard
While plucking May-corns from a thorny bough ;
How that ' his father's land was his again,—
And he would robe her in a purfled gown
And set a crown of gold upon her head,
And she not need to don the hodden grey
Nor toil with fair white hands to win his bread ;—
And she should blaze with jewels like the sun
And no more weep beside a fount a-stray
That missed its God in running through the world !—
And he would teach her all that Beunor taught
When Beunor met him in the forest ways :
And trust was sweet—and Life was good—and God
Sent him, a little child, to teach her Love—
And Christ was Love,—so wherefore did she weep ?'

A little while, and midst the Snowdon woods
Rose the great Christian church of Clunnog Vawr.
A little while, and by the fountain spring
A stone was set ; thereon a cross of stone,
Where they who thirsted sore might drink their fill
Of other water of another Well.—
And there the woman came, and there her son,
And came in after years her son's one child,
Pale Winifred, and sang beside the well,
Offering up heartfelt breath and music-prayers
Unto the Giver and the Fount of all.

THE SPIRIT CHILD.

A BRIDEGROOM'S TALE OF THE NEW YEAR.

I.

'Twas midnight in a haunted house. I had no fears :—
dear heart,

The chambers of the soul are foul when shadows make
us start.

A pine-log sparkled on the hearth : the dying wind
moaned low ;

And, lapping 'gainst the old grey rocks, I heard the sea-
waves flow.

Half shrouded 'neath a curtain's folds, at distance far
away,

I sat and watched the stars of fire fade out in ashes grey ;
When, ushered by a trail of light that seemed to ride on
air,

A footstep with a music fall stole up the household stair.

That seemed no fall of living foot,—that seemed no
mortal tread,

That, like dropped notes from some weird harp, betrayed
a silence fled :

Such notes as o'er the muffled chords the low harmonic
flings

When some skilled hand, with sidelong beat, has softly
struck the strings.

The door swung back without a sound,—slid slowly
from its place,
Smooth as a plank that o'er a stream the rippled waters
chase.
And through the unbarred portal stole a vision sweet as
new,
A child-like form, in mist-white robes,—a lily bathed in
dew.

It was not that her face was fair as angel faces be,
Her floating locks like tendrils strayed from a wine-fruited
tree,
Her meek eyes like the still blue heavens new-opened to
the day,—
It was not these,—dear heart of mine ! that bore my
heart away.

It was that to my lonely hearth, in such a world as
this,
Should come, in pure and childlike faith, a tender soul
from bliss :—
Should pass unshrinking self-sustained, with God's per-
mission given,
The quicksand drift that fills the rift between this world
and heaven.

For it was on a New Year's night, when evil souls are
awed
And spirits touched by God alone in glory walk abroad.
So, out into the darkness, love, I cast the demon fear,
While to the glowing embers slow my vision sweet drew
near.

Low sitting by the flashing wood, with hands like folded
prayers

That lie at rest about the breast, then open unawares,
She basked, and breaking into smiles, seemed with full
grasp to hold

The genial heat that feels so sweet to one whose hearth
is cold.

No movement made I ; not for worlds would I the spell
have broke.—

She moved : she stooped ; the conscious air she softly
seemed to stroke,

As one who chased by peril stands, sole championed by
a hound,—

As one who knows by some fine touch where faithfulness
is found.

A gladdened soul into her eyes, with spirit-pinions stirred,
Half settling where the firelight danced, came fluttering
like a bird,

Radiant as a butterfly among the meadow rings

Tranced in one moment's rapturous clasp and unclasp of
wings !

But now the hearth-light dying low, she rose like some
new day :

The shadowy finger of the dark slow motioned her away :
And, striking on my heartstrings, love, she trod the
visioned air,

And throbbing, throbbing died those wild notes down the
music stair.

II.

A vassal of my father's house, an orphan child of tears,
Stood where the water lance-rush quivered guarded by
the spears ;
When, blowing merry bugle blasts, urging a courser
fleet,
I sought a noble hound I lost—and found him at her feet.

Familiar round his silken ears I watched her fingers curl ;
Her idler hand upon his head lay like a new-dropped
pearl :
As round the oak the mistletoe that owns no native
root,
Her need of love had twined her round the dumb love of
the brute.

Swift fancy to the future flew ! I slipped my courser's
rein.
Grave manhood at my heart stood still ; and youth was
come again.
The prophet in my spirit worked,—so true, I seemed to
know
To what a flower, in sheltered nook, this drooping bud
might blow.

I stole her with a tender touch. I looked into her eyes,
From whose clear depths a fount of joy leaped up in
sweet surprise.
My noble hound I gave to her, about her steps to roam ;
I set her on my courser's back, and led her smiling home.

Was it the dazzling daylight glare a strange confusion made.

Or was this sweet sunlighted soul, the soul that walked in shade?—

On ice-bound rivers heap the fires—the frozen waters flow:
So melting in my bosom's warmth, I knew my child of snow!

Rich joy was ours! The happy hours, along life's dial stealing

Left not a mark to streak with dark the kindled hour of feeling.

To me whose days soared up the prime, to her whose days were few,

The young spring died at summer's side, and still the Year was New.

Through books, the old lost oracles of youth did we explore;

From mount and mine, 'neath oak and vine, I taught her living lore.

The glad morn long with flowers of song we wreathed the budding weather;

On winter eves from old dead leaves we crushed the sweets together.

By day her heart with frankness shared the gladness that she brought:

At night we knew a parted hour—but not a parted thought;

Till, rising from some dream disturbed, she breathed that midnight's breath

That fanned my lone hearth's failing fires—a moving life-in-death.

Bursting the bonds of sleep, as one escaped from prison bars,—
With smiles and sighs—with open eyes that never saw the stars,
Swimming a sea of crystal thoughts, like a white snow-drop drowned,
Each night she came, and breathed my name, and stroked her phantom hound.

Soon fell a change.—Her heart at rest, too happy now for dreams,
Went floating down the tide of sleep, like waifs on silent streams.—
One night I missed her, as we miss the white foot on the floor,
When launched afar on Heaven's blue sea, Life's angels come no more.

III.

Lift, lift those eyes,—my one day's bride!—where love sits throned in youth;
Bid echo speak without a voice, and give back truth for truth:
And pardon that dear treachery which hoarded as a vow
A spirit-secret, dark to thee, and never breathed till now.
O answering kiss!—Leave, leave those lips to linger where they light,
Not waft and go like restless birds bound on a passing flight:

Here let them cling like birds of spring, storm-drifted on
a spray,
Make summer in the winter's heart, and fold their wings
and stay !

Like thee, too, spirit-guided once I wandered in a dream,
And musing strayed and found a maid lost by a haunted
stream,
Her brows with shining innocence, like some rich jewel,
crowned,
Girt by lances of the angels, love, that kept the guarded
ground.

She to whose soul all loving words were relics laid at rest,
Stole a dumb love in silent faith and clasped it to her
breast.—

A Christmas rose snatched from the snows that bound a
grave, she smiled

With dew upon her eyelids, love,—a spirit, yet a child !

She met me with the cruel hunter's flush upon my face ;
She plucked the arrow from my hand, and set a reed in
place :

She garlanded my father's hall with lilies of the field ;
She chained with ivy to the wall my helm, my sword,
my shield.

She took my heart and moulded it, to spirit turned the
clay,

Till like another Memnon, love, I felt the touch of day,
As stealing with the steps of dawn, each step a music-
beat,

She walked the chambers of my soul with light about her
feet !

Though wrecked like him, whose ruins mock the old
Egyptian sod,
I knew the hand that kindled while it lifted me to God,
Clasped in life's stony desert, love, each silent pulse
would thrill,
And quicken with immortal fire, and make a music still.

It comes. I hear a music voice that dies not with the sun.
One vision lost, a sweeter vision whispers all I won :
This heart—the heart that beats to mine, the soul to
Heaven true,
'The wifeness of my wildest dream—the Child and Spirit
too !



THUNNOR'S SLIP.

A LEGEND OF THANET.

*"Insula rotunda Thanatos quam circuit unda
Fertilis et munda nulli est in orbe secunda."*

ANCIENT INSCRIPTION.

In Rome's Rutupium, fruited Thanatos,
While yet she lay full isled upon the sea
That clasped her round wide-armed with all her vines,
A legend lives of our first Christian days.

In that gone time when vineyards clothed the steeps
That whited to the wave, and the rocked ships
Sailed up by Sarre, Egbert was king. The land,
First conscious of Christ's footsteps, bloomed with
prayer.

Fair structure after structure, piled and spired,
With broad-sprung arches like to Iris bows,
And rainbow-lighted oriels, kissed the skies.
Men grew devout, but fearful. Crime was hid
No longer, nor with brazen tongue proclaimed;
But evil done was on the altar laid
In sacrifice of soul.

And so it fell
That Egbert, tempted of a fiend in shape

Of one named Thunnor, a base hireling knave,
Did unto death the children of his brother,
By 'Thunnor's hand. For so his conscience cried,
Though never word of his had sealed their doom ;
But the apt knave, in Egbert's mild rebuke,
When Thunnor touched the point of their offence—
Their eager youthful eyes upon the crown—
Read the willed murder in his downward looks.
The deed done, Egbert cursed himself and fled
Unto the holy rood.

Praying alone—

For so she deemed—within her chapelry,
His brother's daughter, pious-taught Domneva,
Hearing loud sobs from a dark nook hard by,
Faced her prayer-fellow.

“ Oh, my king,” she cried,
“ And kinsman, wherefore weepest thou ?”

“ I weep,
I weep,” he said, “ the blood upon these hands,
Thy blood and my blood, treacherously poured.”

Then her full sorrow burst forth all afresh.
For fearful visions prophesying doom
To those fair branches of her father's tree,
Had warned her lord, King Penda, in deep sleep
In Mercia, his own land, where he abode.
Nothing surprised, but in deep ruth of soul
She wept those fair young corpses where they lay
Dead at the throne's foot they so well had graced :
Two acorns fallen untimely from their cups

Never to root on earth and blow to trees
Whose royal tops should bless with shade the land
Whereon the violet of peace might grow.

But women weep but while they weep alone ;
And no remede is there to stay their tears
Like tears of other.

Turning fairest face
Unto the slayer—slayer of the loved,
Her last of kin—in gentleness she spoke :
“ Let sorrow have swift end. Grief will not bring
Their beauty back from grave. Bless God, and lay
Thy pride here down for sacrifice. Oh, king,
Thy hand is red ; yet He may whiten it,
Who only spotless lived : the matchless lily
That Mary-mother on her bosom bore.”

“ Put me to penance !” Egbert quickly cried.
“ Breathe me some comfort in my bitter need.
What pang—what scourge soe’er thou shalt enjoin,
That will I rue.”

“ Nay, give me then,” she said,
“ Some plot of earth thou prizest most of all
In this fair land wherein thy kingdom is :
And grant me there to build a goodly house
For holy nuns. These for their souls shall pray
Whose beauty lieth with the dust of kings ;
And haply out of such meek prayers shall rise
Comfort to thee and pardon for thy sin.”

In fitting hour the grant was ruled. But when
King Egbert asked how much of ground should gr

Whereon to build a house for good of souls,
Domneva answered, "Just so much of ground
As a wild deer may track, without to seek
Rest for its footing, running where it lists."

The day was come ; and crowds to see the day.
King Egbert on the crown of a green hill
Waited the running of the fleet-foot roe,
Smiling down half his grief : Domneva near.
The frightened roe, with innocent eyes astray,
Wild as Undine's seeking for a soul,
Soft-dappled like the mole of Imogen,
Trapped by a bondman with a firm-noosed thong,
Stood straining at the knot, and chafed.

But one
Was wild with rage, that such far-stretching range
Of Kentish land should go for good of prayer,
That would have made him half as rich a king
As him he served, still seeking blood-reward.
This was that Thunnor who had cropped in sleep
The fair twin-fruits of Thanet.

"Cursed," he cried,
"Be every rood that owns the wild deer's tread !
May earthquake rend and landslip traverse it :
May mad waves sap its cliffs, and, beating, lay
Its greenness low beneath the greener sea,
With all that on it grows, and lives, and thrives !
Amen, amen, amen !"

Laughing in scorn
Of his own burthen, mimicked from the priest's,
He yelled that song of curse, till all the hills
Gave back the sound—"Amen, amen, amen."

And now amazement held the crowd in check,
Took the king's breath, and flushed Domneva's veins
To the meek brow. The signal scarce gave sound—
King Egbert's shield struck by King Egbert's palm—
The bondman scarce had loosed the well-noosed thong;
Scarce slipped the deer, all eager for the run,
Than Thunnor, leaping forth with sudden bound,
Held on in chase of the fleet-footed roe !

A moment more, and through the seething throng
Dumb wonder broke its chain : and, cheering on
The fleet-foot fawn, the crowd, all eager now,
Shouted with well-strained lungs. But Thunnor held
His breath at his command, better to speed
His angry chase, with parry, dodge, and sleight,
Double and turn, about the scared deer's path.

Turned from its course adown the meadland vale,
Hither and thither baffled by the foe,
The frightened roe bore madly for the sea
Where the old Roman towers frowned o'er the steep.
Triumph lent vigour now to Thunnor's chase :
" The sea—the sea !—I'll goad her to the leap !"

As, muttering thus, he neared a jutting crag
That toppled o'er the deep, before him lay
A narrow crevice closely overgrown
With sea-maid's amaranth, waving tamarisk,
Red-stemmed of bough, rose-blooming o'er the wave.
Lightly the deer o'erleaped the treacherous breach,
And lightly Thunnor. Safe upon the crag,
The two held on, mad-chasing towards the brink,
Like love pursued by death.

But soon the roe,
Quick doubling on her steps, re-leaped the chasm,
And straight bore back for the free greenland dale,
Making for Sarre.

Thunnor, unwinded now,
Out-chased and spent, stood pausing for a breath ;
He sole upon the crag.

Sudden, a cry—
Whose only issue was to speed the deer
Faster and faster o'er the prayer-won ground—
Broke from the caitiff.

Slow as doom—as sure !
The crag, harsh breaking from the twining clasp
Of sea-maid's amaranth, waving tamarisk,
Moved visibly !

One moment's grasp of thought,
A hero's mastery of time and place,
Had saved him yet. One bold, far, instant leap—
A man with conscience clear to Heaven had dared it—
Had made the yawning gap a bridge to Life.
But guilt had scared the wretch, and the sharp thought
Of his own curse :—how he had cursed the land,
Cursed it with curse of earthquake, landslip, sea !
Before the strained eyes of the unhelpful crowd
Down-launched to sea the slipping landcraft sailed
The murderer on its deck, with arms aloft,
And grappled hair, and quivering knees unbent
To God !

No wail went up upon the wind.
The land he cursed disowned him. Stark he lies.
Above his bones we hear the wild tides beat.

All their timed lash of waves shall ne'er wash clean
The sin of him whose curse they daily scourge
With the white rod of the great-crested sea.

But Egbert's sorrow brought him touch of heal.
High on the crown of that vine-circled hill
Where watched the king the coursing of the deer,
A flaring beacon, set for help at sea,
Flame-tongued cried out "*a murderer 'neath a rock
Lies here below ; good mariners beware !*"
Along the wild roc's track, Donnavea built
A goodly dyke, dividing fair in two
Sweet Thanet isled upon the sea : so far
The innocent roc had marked the land for prayer !
There rose a convent's walls where quiet nuns
Hymned up meek vows, and filled their souls with tears,
Their lips with prayers, for the lost youths who lay
Dead 'neath the throne they should have filled with
beauty.

No more the ships came up by Sarre. No more
Curl the grape tendrils where thy "vyneyarde" lies,
Fair Inis Ruim belted by the tides !
But still the tamarisk waves, for sea-maid's hair
A fitting coronal, where o'er the surge,
Trench, wall, and fosse write plain the Roman's name :
And Minster's ancient lore, 'mid tales of kings,
Records how Thunnor sailed, crag-borne, to sea.



THE NEW YEAR'S BIRTH.

FROM out this trance of sleep I wake—behold !
 A forest waving white—a sky of gold,
 And, o'er green earth below,
 God's footprints in the snow !
 While airs of heaven come mingling sweet.
 From echoing paths where children meet.

Oh ! world of love and peace ! how full of light
 They only know who gaze on thee aright,
 When by the glad hearth's stone
 Some angel voice makes known,
 In accents soft as seraph's sigh,
 Heaven hath its place *beneath* the sky.

The New Year on thy sunny locks, my boy !
 Flings down a golden crown ; and thy pure joy
 Doth counsel me to see
 Life in each leafless tree,
 Flowers where the sun hath sent no gleam,
 And springs within the frosted stream.

So be it, gentlest Teacher ! They are wise
 Who look on Nature's face with childhood's eyes ;
 Giving and taking light
 From all most blest and bright,
 Ere yet the earth-born shadows roll
 O'er youth's clear mirror of the soul.

She is to me, as I to thee, my sweet !
Dear mother and true friend ; all names that meet
Where love is strong : her brow
Wears yet no cloud, while thou
Like to a young day's dawn art near,
My promise of the golden year !

Welcome then still for thy beloved sake,
New suns, new hopes, new blessings that may wake
A thankful heart and lowly !
And still—for love is holy,
Greet thou each morn, as thou dost now,
With kisses showered upon my brow !



· RELICS OF BISHOP VALENTINE.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the key findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.

Relics of Bishop Valentine.

THE FIRST FOOT.*

SHE glads, like spring, my threshold path,
A child of love and light.
Her eye more heavenly beauty hath
Than starry eyes of night.
Where wave and sward their margins weave,
She comes and clasps me round,
A sweeter younger Genevieve
Of this love-haunted ground.

Unto my face her aspect bright
She lifts in meaning wonder ;
She knows not whence upsprings the light
That streams mine eyelids under :
Sweet thoughts and holy, lurking there,
Surprise her into sighing,
Till, speechless grown, that breathful air
Is all her soul's replying.

* Bishop Valentine is said to have been a man of so much love and charity that from thence arose many of the more amiable and graceful observances of his day. Thus, children will sometimes dispute with lovers the privilege of being the first to greet a friend on the morning of St. Valentine.

But strains that fill my vision-land
To her their tones imparting,
Soon wake in echoes near at hand,
Up from her bosom starting ;
And forth at length they burst, a throng
Of sweet thoughts unrepressed,
Snatches of sympathetic song,—
Her soft hand speaks the rest.

A woman is she—yet a child,
A woman's faith enfolds her ;
Yet knows she not—the sweet and wild !
What bondage yet shall hold her ;
When hearts shall leap, as hers to mine,
Disturbed by tender dreaming,
Where, mingled deep, a love divine
With human love is beaming.

She fears not yet the star to greet
That ushers in the morrow ;
Not yet within her bosom meet
The tides of joy and sorrow ;
She only sees—she only knows
The dim perceptive beauty
Where through another's being flows
The light of Love and Duty.



THE BLACK SHEPHERD.

A FAIRY EXTRAVAGANZA.

IN Fairy land, where happy love is voted quite the thing,
And joyous spirits frisk and whisk and whistle in a ring,
King Oberon flew home one night, not needing a latch-
key,

And found Titania sitting up, and sucking a split pea.

With sundry little swaggering flights, and tiny, saucy
skips,

He pounced upon her like a bee, and settled on her lips.

"O darling pet!" Titania cried—a kiss with every
breath—

Those dreadful Brownies of the Hill, I vow they'll be
my death!

"Last April, when in Taurus, sweet! the sun was
making signs,

When every bird looked like a goose—that bird that
never shines,

They seized a gay court page,—his coat of bachelor-
buttons full:

They pinched his side and made him ride upon an Irish
bull.

"My wings! a sorry jest was that. But oh, my sweetest flower!

What do you think they've been and done this very, very hour?

They've caught a poor black shepherd, pet! as woolly as a bear,

And with a red cock's currycomb they want to comb his hair!

"On each sheep's pretty trotter, pop! they want to tie a clog!

They even say the shepherd's dog is not a shepherd's dog;

But when the lambs in frolic mood go scouring down the vale,

Sits looking in his master's face and only wags his tail!

"They say the shepherd black will sing, when sheep ought to chase;

They call his hair a bag of soot left in a sooty place.

I saw him with these own, own eyes, lit by a glow-worm spark:

His wool was wool, but then his face was not so *very* dark.

"The white lambs, young and innocent, about him frisked and played;

The black sheep came and licked his hand, and did not seem afraid.

As for that naughty pugsy-pop that scurries at his heels, True, he sometimes barks at cripples, but we know not what he feels.

"I wish those eyes could see the shepherd dumbling of
their choice :

Poor lambs ! for him they'd never know joy ever had a
voice.

A lump of salt to smack their lips he carries in a bag,
With a crusty cur to snarl and drive, with not a tail to
wag !

"Now, what say you, my darling Obe ? For me, I think,
myself,

Such goings on this time of year enough to stun an elf !—
Will rivers fill with stocks and stones, will this green
earth grow grey,

Because a man goes pastoring in a beneficial way ?

"Dear goodness gracious, Oberon ! my little snug good-
man,

Do help your cosy fairy wife as only fairy can.

Don't linger here, sweet ! kissing me ; but out to meet
the sun :

We'll drive the mice, and in a trice we'll see what can
be done.

"In spite of Brownny's stupid 'pooh's and 'tush'es
'pshaw's and 'pish'es,

Just now, you know, love, when the sun goes waltzing
with the fishes,

The dear black saint shall sing all day to tunes the old
sheep bellow—

But here comes Puck, my love of loves, my darling,
sweet Good-fellow !"

The last kiss scarce had left her lips, when up rode plucky
Puck,
His wings in senna-bladders cased, and mounted on a
duck :
The maddest, merriest urchin wag, the queerest, queerest
sprite
That ever froze with puckered nose upon a wild March
night.

His rein a filmy gossamer, an upcurved leaf his saddle ;
A wispy reed-whip in his hand, his punchy legs
astraddle.
His eyes were brimmed with fun, his heart was laughing
at the core :
Such a whibby whobby hobby-horse he never rode before.

“ You sweet fat chick ! ” Titania cried, “ you prince of
little swells !
How ever *do* you tuck your toes among the bobbing
bells ?
Quick ! tell me, Puck, what mischief’s ripe, and where
the Brownies go,
With beetle brows and hearts of stone, like nutmegs in a
row ? ”

“ Dressed in such frights of garments, Tit ! such suits of
precious drab
As tint an old toad’s mottled stool, or vein a mushroom
slab :
Each with a cone-cap on his head, and looking like a fool ;
Each with a burry teasel tall to tease the shepherd’s
wool.

"I roared at them, I whipped at them, I rode at them
a-tilt,
Till out of all their firry caps the dainty dew was spilt.
Into their midst in furious rage my duck of ponies flew,
And dashed at all their teasel-stalks, and snapped them
each in two.

"Away they skirled, of martial Puck the warlike measures
ruing :
And when I found the shepherd black, what think you
he was doing ?
Lest laughter wild should split your sides, your mouth
with bird-seeds fill—
He was scrawling on a sheepskin, Tit ! and writing with
—a quill !

"Chanting, and shedding round such tears as laughing
mortals weep,
He felt the brush of fairy wings, and, tickled, fell asleep.
From off his knees, like some sharp breeze, I whiffed
this sooty scroll,
This scrilly-scrawl, signed '*Valentine*' — this precious
rigmarole !

"Such lines were never quilled before ; such words I
never seed
Since from a dry papyrus skin old Sap taught me to read.
So, father Obe and mother Tit, your ears and patience
lend ;
With fingers on your lips cry 'mum,' and hear me to
the end.

“ ‘ I was once a selfish bachelor shabed in a lonely cell :
They came and made me Bishop—why, the saints alone can
tell !

I drank too much of Malmsey wine—it is the old, old story,
And fell upon a pumpkin pie in the re—sec—tory—ory.

“ ‘ The sly lay-brothers winked their eyes ; aghast the abbots
stood,

To find so much of mischief lurk beneath a grave monk’s hood.
They took my pie—and ate it ! Aye, and drained my flowing
bowl.

They said they ‘ found me wanting,’ and then hiccupped—
‘ a lost soul !’

“ ‘ The saintesses in every niche sat grinning their alarms,
And all the little cherub-faces they were up in arms.

They fla—ge—la—ted me enough to make a sinner weep :
The Pope, too, came—forgot my name—and called me a Black
Sheep !

“ ‘ Now only think what frightful things the power of wrath
can do :

No sooner had he touched my poll, and looked me through
and through,

Than all my red blood turned to black, black as a midnight-
pool ;

Where’er I looked I cast sheep’s eyes—and all my hair was
wool !

Valentine.’ ”



A SPENSERIAN WOOER.

I HAVE not wooed thee as the many woo ;
 I have not cast my heart beneath thy feet :
 I loved thee with a spirit proud and true ;
 And if my words have seemed nor smooth nor
 sweet,

It is that these poor pulses stay their beat
 To pause upon the music of thy tongue !
 Silence and Truth, dear love ! do ofttimes meet :
 Even Hope, scarce quickened, falters and dies
 young,

As chords will snap asunder when a lyre is newly
 strung.

But hold me in thy patience yet awhile :
 The heavens do hear me oft when thou art far—
 If far thou canst be where my heavens smile.
 I never likened thee unto a star,
 Or told thee thou wert what the angels are ;—
 Angels are pitiful, and thou art not :
 The whiteness of thy soul thou wouldst not mar,
 And on its stainless mirror 'twere a blot
 If love's most noble claim to love, in pity, were forgot.

True souls do ask no guerdon save the bliss
 Of purely loving that which is most pure ;
 It is the virgin's robe whose hem we kiss,
 Not the stage mantle, worn but to allure :
 And thou in thy heart's singleness art sure
 The joy of loving thee may well atone
 For all thy coldness calls me to endure.
 Right-seated love is likest on his throne
 To souls enshrined upon dead lips—that smile, but make
 no moan.

Freed from its once apparel of the clay,
 The wakened soul stands beautiful and mute,
 Like to a sun new-risen to the day,
 Whose glorious orb puts off night's mourning suit.
 The worn husk droppeth from the ripened fruit.
 Scant is the earth where mountain pines abound :
 So love is best, though starving at the root,
 Whose higher life is by the sunbeams crowned :
 So larks sing sweet in upper air, though mute on gras
 ground.

When one by one the silent moonbeams climb
 Those airy heights which only lovers know,
 And, fainting on the barren steps of Time,
 The beggared heart can see to count its woe,
 Comfort falls soft as footsteps on the snow !
 Then to my side thy spirit steals unsought ;
 And, heedless how the night-tides ebb and flow
 We two, love-armed, do set the hours at nought
 Watching the quiet stars die out with a most rare
 thought.

Thou canst not see me with thine earthly eyes,
Thou canst not feel my hand upon thy brow ;
Yet, nestling on my heart thy beauty lies,
More real far than I behold thee now.
My waking life is one unanswered vow ;
But in deep dreams, my sweet ! this is not so :
My spirit-kiss thy spirit doth allow.
Thou seest my joy, as those who Northward go
See waters rise among the wolds, yet know not whence
they flow.

And thou dost marvel at the quiet thought
Which makes a greenness wheresoe'er I tread :
The summer garlands into beauty wrought
Do babble not of where their bloom was fed :—
Blessèd the dews that are in silence shed !
The flower wherein the wild bee dives at noon
Will drop its petals when its sweets are fled :
My years would drop so withered and so soon ;
The life that lacked love's secret sweet were but a thank-
less boon.

And now when Love stands crowned among the
saints,
For this one day my heart is fain to speak,
Though the pulse trembles and the spirit faints
To feel how breath is frail and words are weak
To sum the measure of the wealth I seek !
If I do wrong, O tenderest soul ! forbear
To chide me with the glow upon thy cheek.
I would not owe thy love to my despair :
Love's seed doth root and flourish best sown by the
random air.

Go! fling thy tresses on the winds of morn,
And let the stars be mirrored in thine eye :
Better I died heart-blinded by thy scorn,
Than thou shouldst live the slave unto a sigh !
Like those untrammelled flowers that round thee lie,
Free in their inmost breath, should'st thou be free :
So, till thy soul to Love's fair shore draws nigh
True as a billow of the unlashed sea,
No self-born wish of mine shall stand 'twixt thy sweet
will and thee.



THE CARRIER DOVE.

HAST brought my secret safe to me ?
 Hath none beheld thee on thy way ?
 Say, Love-bird of the West, ah, say
 What jealous eyes encountered thee.

They foamed the waters as they went,
 Those mettled winds that bore thy plumes :
 The orange flower this scroll perfumes
 New odours through the roses sent.

Did none detect the rose more rath ?
 Did none discern the whiter waves ?
 Did no sea-monsters in their caves
 Track thy swift course along their path ?

Burst there not forth a rarer light
 From shimmer of the bright page cast ?
 The ruffled dove-cotes as it passed,
 Broke they no silence of the night ?

Did no heart-pulse of the pine-wood beat
 To the music of its silken strings ?
 With the soft whisper of thy wings
 Didst tell of it to the mountains, sweet ?

Hast brought my secret safe to me ?
Hath none beheld thee on thy way ?
Say, Love-bird of the West, ah, say,
What jealous eyes encountered thee ?

What mortal did thy starting see ?
Who marked thee first to heaven arise,
Where, wheeling giddy with thy prize,
Thy vision pierced the clouds to me ?

Did any know, did any dream
The hand that laid it on thy breast ?
Did any mark the strange unrest
That sounded in the swallow's scream ?

The swallow hath a twofold face,
Now light, now dark ; and who shall say
What tale those changeful wings convey
To the keen eyes of watchful space ?

The drowsing winds for ever wake
To list the shrilly swallow's call ;
The dullard billows rise and fall
To catch her voice through wood and brake.

Say, will not sunshine and soft rain
Together blend in rainbow smiles
When to the circle of the isles
The tell-tale swallow comes again ?

Hast brought my secret safe to me ?
Hath none beheld thee on thy way ?
Say, Love-bird of the West, ah, say,
What jealous eyes encountered thee ?

The west-borne waves from tropic seas
Will they not murmur of his name ?
Will not the angry winds proclaim
His flying sails that kiss the breeze ?

The sun that lit thy parting flight
Hath knocked at every lattice pane ;
And, meeting him on heath and plain,
The curious moon hath snatched his light.

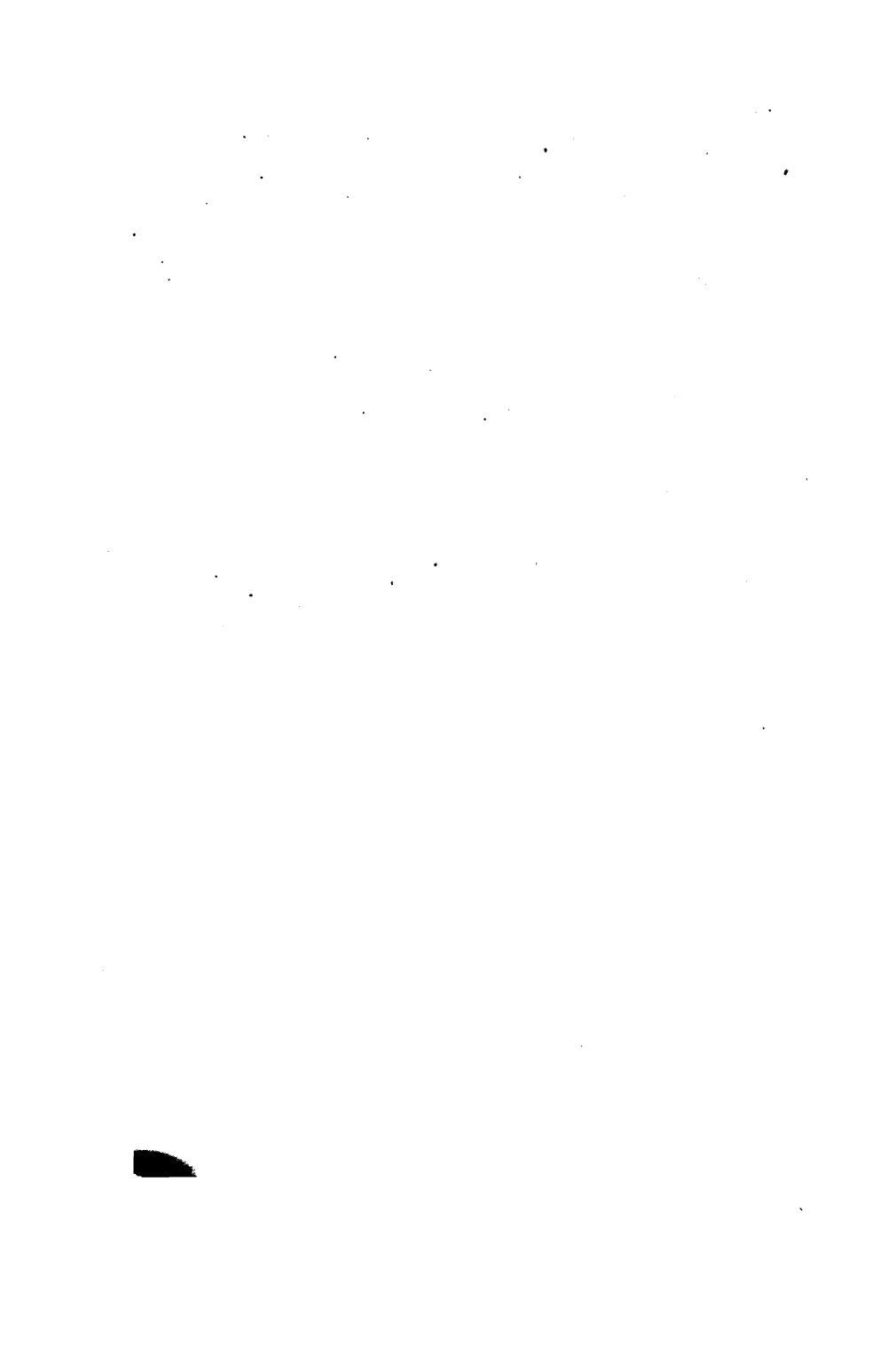
And she will wander through the world,
No cloud before her treacherous face,
And spy my treasure in its place,
Seeing thy tender wings unfurled.

Hast thou no voice ? Thy drooping eyes
Wear a strange look, half doubt half fear,
As if the prying stars were near
In this soft hour when daylight dies.

Slumber's soft shadow round thee clings.
Thou hear'st me not.—Ay, sink to rest.
Lay down thy burthen on my breast
And hide my joy beneath thy wings.



A MEDLEY.



A Medley.

A PRISONER'S PRAYER.

Caroline Matilda, queen in Denmark : prisoner at Kronborg :
corpse, Hanover, May 11, 1775, aged 23 years.

“OH, keep me innocent : make others great !”*
Such was thy captive cry,
Thou, fit to rule, though not where kings keep state,
And fitter still to die.

To die, and rule the world with words that live :
To pass to dust, and leave
A pearl to Time. Thy pearl of prayers shall give
Light while his seas shall heave.

Oh, tender pleader, innocency's mate,
Woman ! couldst thou not see
How wild a prayer was thine ? “ Not me make great.”
What angel blinded thee ?

* Words written by the captive queen on the window of her
prison at Kronborg.

Thy voice was raised in vain. Thou didst but rave.
How weak wert thou to cry,
"Sweet innocence let live!" Behold—a grave:
Sweet innocence must die.

Great Heaven confounds thy prayer. Now thou dost
How God, in love not hate,
Took back thine innocence in taking thee,
And, taking, left thee great.



AFTER THE METEORS.

NOVEMBER, 1866.

THOU steel-girt Earth, like Amazon of old
 That moved so late amidst the burst of spears,
 Where round thy path the hurl of battle rolled,
 With all the battle-music in thine ears
 Of fiery arrows rushing through mid-air,
 Now calm thou liest as a nun at rest ;
 And so shalt lie, as tranquil and as fair,
 Thy snow-clasped hands above thy snow-bound breast,
 While round thy corse the priestess moons shall glide
 Each after other with a noiseless tread,
 Binding the olive to thy swordless side,
 Dropping the hollies on thy silent bed ;
 While one vast vault shall meet thine upturned face,
 Where every light is burning in its place.



ALFRED THE GREAT TEACHING THE ANGLO-SAXON YOUTH.

THROWN 'midst the children of his land,
God's law within his just right hand,
Behold the sage whose righteous rule
Made of our England one wide school.
O worthy he to fill a throne :
He counts their need who felt his own ;
And in his light that they may bask,
He bends his great soul to the task.

“ O youth, that goest forth to fight
Life's holy battle for the right ;
O man, that shalt be in the day
When I must cast this crown away ;
Through fair and foul, through good and ill,
Heed thou this one true maxim still :
Let God's high law and will be done,
And other law thou needest none.

“ Be simple as the flowers ye press
With lowliest foot. Care not to guess
The evils that come all too soon.
Be slow to harp on glory's tune.
Count him a conqueror alone
Who points his sword to God's great throne.
Who dies for Faith is not foredone :
Kingdoms so lost are kingdoms won.

“ Take counsel of the good and sage.
Be lovers of God’s glorious page :
Vain are all joys in life’s poor reach
If ye shall lack what this doth teach.
The body’s sense is dull and slow
To that fine wit the mind doth show.
Though life may perish as the grass,
Learning and wisdom shall not pass.

“ Be truthful aye in deed and word :
Dumb deeds have lied, but God hath heard.
If ye be false, dread more than death
The message winds that bear your breath :
These shall lend tongues to each low sigh ;
These shall betray ye, though ye lie.
Remember still, at Jesus’ nod,
The Twelve stand jury before God !”



HANS EULER.

From the German of J. G. Seidl.

"HARK, child—again that knocking! Go, fling wide
the door, I pray;
Perchance 'tis some poor pilgrim who has wandered from
his way.
Now, save thee, gallant stranger! Sit thou down and
share our cheer:
Our bread is white and wholesome,—see! our drink is
fresh and clear."

"I come not here your bread to share, nor of your drink
to speak.
Your name?"—"Hans Euler."—"So! 'tis well: it is
your blood I seek.
Know that through many a weary year I've sought you
for a foe.
I had a goodly brother once: 'twas you who laid him
low.

"And as he bit the dust, I vowed that soon or late on
you
His death should be avenged; and mark! that oath I
will keep true."
"I slew him; but in quarrel just. I fought him hand
to hand:
Yet, since you would avenge his fall,—I'm ready; take
your stand.

“ But I war not in my homestead, by this hearth
whereon I tread ;
Not in sight of these, my dear ones, for whose safety I
have bled.

My daughter, reach me down yon sword, the same that
laid him low ;
And if I ne’er come back again, Tyrol has sons enow.”

So forth they fared together up the glorious Alpine
way,
Where newly now the kindling east led on the golden
day.

The sun that mounted with them, as he rose in all his
pride,
Still saw the stranger toiling on, Hans Euler for his
guide.

They climbed the mountain summit ; and behold ! the
Alpine world
Showed clear and bright before them, ’neath the mists
that upward curled.

Below them, calm and happy, lay the valley in her rest,
With the châteaux in her arms, and with their dwellers on
her breast.

Amidst were sparkling waters ; giant chasms, scarred and
riven ;

Vast crowning woods ; and over all the pure, blest air
of heaven :

And, sacred in the sight of God, where peace her trea-
sures spread,

On every hearth, on every home, the soul of freedom
shed !

Both gazed in solemn silence down. The stranger stayed his hand.

Hans Euler gently pointed to his own beloved land :

“ ’Twas this thy brother threatened ; such a wrong might move me well.

’Twas in such a cause I struggled : ’twas for such a fault he fell.”

The stranger paused ; then, turning, looked Hans Euler in the face.

The arm that would have raised the sword fell powerless in its place.

“ You slew him. Was it, then, for this—for home and father-land ?

Forgive me ! ’Twas a righteous cause. Hans Euler, there’s my hand ! ”



THE SILENT PRAYER.

SHE prayed.—I watched her nightly
 On her knees beside the bed :
 And for awhile each prayer-time
 I heard the words she said.

And then there fell a silence
 On her bowed head ; and I thought
 My senses had been sleeping,
 Since her words I had not caught.

But duly as the night came,
 Came that silent prayer again ;
 I marked her lips unmoving,
 And I knew the mystery then.

Was she praying for the living ?
 Was she praying for the dead ?
 There was no sobbing, sighing ;
 And not a tear was shed.

She was fragile in her beauty
 As a leaf before the blast :
 Was she praying for sweet patience
 Till the storm was overpast ?

Who shall tell us of her loving ?
 Who shall tell us of her tears ?
 She is gone from us for ever
 In her uncompleted years.

Gone like snow from off the mountain,
Gone like mist from out the vale,
In her golden hour of morning
She was swept before the gale.

She never told in dying
What had winged that silent prayer ;
But something we divined it
When we saw her look so fair :

Fair with lilies on her bosom,
Fair as lilies and as sweet ;
Fair with slumber on her forehead,
Fair with silence at her feet.

Ere the hand of Death could reach her
She had flown to meet his kiss :
Ere another land could claim her
She was far away from this.

She was far beyond our sunshine ;
She was breathing other air,
Alone with her Creator
In the shadow of a prayer.



ANCIENT CLAN DIRGE.

MURTOCH is dead, man ! Clan-brothers, come ;
 Lend each a hand, man, to bear the dead home.
 Strike up the coronach, last of his needs ;
 Honour him, cry to him, tell of his deeds :
 Murtoch of Bargie, man, Murtoch of Forth,
 Murtoch the Southlander, Star of the North !

Go ye by East, man, or go ye by West,
 Murtoch, brown Murtoch, is counted the best.
 Tallest of head, man, and foremost of foot ;
 Sound to his innermost, leaf, branch, and root.
 Straight to his mark like a spear would he go ;
 Slow in his wrath, man, but quick on the foe.

Tell to his widow her hearthlight is cold ;
 Take her this shaggy lock, redder than gold.
 Cover his face-wound, and turn his blurred shield ;
 Whisper his children their father's a-field.
 Murtoch of Bargie, man, cease to deplore :
 Strike up a lilt as ye near to the door.

Mellow of voice was he : hark to his cry :
 " Faithful to live, man, and faithful to die !"
 Gone, gone for aye, man, by sea and by shore.
 Strike up the coronach ; speak him once more.
 Leal to his friend, man, and fair to his foe :
 True to his clan, man, in weal and woe !

SO FAR AWAY.

For Music.

I.

So far away—so far away !
 Thy stars are not the stars I see :
 With me 'tis night ; with thee 'tis day ;
 And day and night are one to me,
 So far—so far away !

II.

I faint beneath those wandering airs
 Whose wings around the world go free.
 I snatch at straws the whirlwind bears :
 Touched they the land that blooms for thee,
 So far—so far away ?

III.

The endless hours swim round and round ;
 The flowers are swooning on the lea :
 The sweetness of the world is drowned,
 And hope floats dead o'er yonder sea,
 So far—so far away !

GRISELDA.

SOUND, sound once more the muffled bell : toll for another
dead ;

And heap,—heap high, the coals of fire, not ashes, on my
head !

Ye have mocked me with my patience : let no more such
incense rise ;

For here, of women most accursed, the lost Griselda
lies !

I was a shepherd's daughter ; and I used to watch the
fold

At eve beside a little cairn upon a lonely wold ;

And I wept to see the new-yeaned lambs how close they
lay at rest

'Neath the parent breath that fanned them like a soft wind
from the west.

O ! motherhood is strong as life ; and strongest in the
least :

It findeth out sweet channels in the poor four-footed
beast.

She giveth suck to the strange kid if it wailleth for its
dam :

But I ?—My bird to the kite I gave, and to the wolf my
lamb !

He came ;—he stopped : he saw me with the pitcher in
my hand.

No cool draught since, these parching lips have touched
in all the land !

Alas ! I took him for my lord : my father clutched his
gold ;

And I left the young sheep bleating, and the cottage by
the wold.

Then years drew on, the darkest ever womanhood
beheld,

When the shaft of love was shivered, and the shriek of
anguish quelled.

I sometimes think my brain swam round in that deep
sorrow-flood :

But I had vowed obedience ; and the bond was sealed—
in blood !

My darlings ! shall I dare to seek the eyes ye turn away
In those pasture-lands that lie afar in the purpling of God's
day ?

There angels true to motherhood, whose robes are God's
own light,

Will meet my step on heaven's floor and bar me from
your sight.

The lowly ant whom motherhood to earth unerring
brings,

To Nature's instinct blindly true, rends off her clay-bound
wings ;

But I, to whom a holier sense and higher gifts were
given,

The wings that *I* have torn away had wafted me to
heaven !

THE STRAYED HOUND.

THOU art not of my kind, nor knowest
 What manner of a soul I bear,
 Save by that instinct which thou showest,
 God's gift to thee, a jewel rare ;
 A power by which to understand
 The pitying touch of this weak hand.

Like some lost human sense, to thee
 It teaches what man cannot teach,
 Our common nature's mystery
 Which lies beyond his reason's reach.
 Thy quick bright eyes—so keen, so true,
 Can pierce my being through and through.

I do but look on thee, and lo !
 Thou'rt all one quiver of delight.
 Thou seem'st, thus dancing to and fro,
 Some beam of heaven's reflected light ;
 A flash of joy—a sportive ray,
 To haunt and guide my darkened way.

What is thy need, O gentle friend,
 That thou must watch me where I sit
 Chasing vain shadows without end,
 Nursing sick sorrow's fever-fit ?
 Why whinest thou beside my door ?
 I did but cry : " My heart is sore."

Thou canst not heal it : go thy way.

Thou wilt not ? Nay, then, rest thee here :
There's something in thy looks doth say

“ To me thy chamber is not drear.”

Methinks thou'rt sent, at last, though late,
To teach me how to “ stand and wait.”

What if I smote thee ? Never wince !

I would not do myself that shame.

My soul is struck, poor friend ; yet since

Revenge thou knowest not even by name,

I will go pray while strength is mine

For such a nature as is thine.

Say, did I smite, wouldst thou leap up

And touch my cheek with silent tongue ?

Ay, thou wouldst drain the bitter cup,

Nor inly cry : “ My heart is stung ;”

But melt my wrath with blithesome cheer,

Turning my passion to a tear.

Come ! lay thy head upon my knee,

Thou patient servant, wise as strong !

I'll bow me down, and learn of thee

To win by love that suffers long ;

And find all rest beneath the sun

In the calm sense of duty done.



CHILD-LED.

LEND me your hand. So ! lead me forth awhile.

Thought wearies ; and my visions are no more
 What they have been. Ne'er to the dayspring's smile,
 Nor evening's clouded brow, nor ocean's floor,
 Nor heaven's arching roof, shall time restore
 The beauty and the grace which to these eyes they
 wore.

How soft a fragrance plays about the air !

These borrowed sweets are of the mead-flowers'
 lending :

I feel, although I say not, they are fair

Where with closed lids they mark the sun-life's ending.

Beneath the breeze I hear the grass-waves bending.

Joys caught from every sense within my soul are blending.

Where then has beauty or has grace departed ?

Though crushed, I see them ; and though stunned, I
 feel.

Even were I fainter and more feeble-hearted,

Hast thou no touch, Great Mother, that could heal ?

Art thou not all things in our woe or weal :

And wilt thou scorn, nor hear, the old forlorn appeal ?

Oft when, in some such gracious hour as this,
Child-like in spirit, faltering, weak, child-led,
Offering my tear-stained cheek unto thy kiss,
The breezy upland paths to thee I tread,
Thou, when all other joys are faint or fled,
A calm as of the grave around my steps dost shed.

Breathe on me still ; my soul is full of thee :
Yet is my heart disquieted and weak.
Thou that providest honey for the bee,
Leave me not comfortless that food to seek
Which the mind craves of thee. Lay on my cheek
Thy soothing touch, O thou that fill'st the wild bird's
beak !



TYRANNY.

WE stood where pale the roses blew.
Her voice rang calm and sweet.
And thus at last she laid her past
Of sorrow at my feet.

“They who bear the weight of tyranny
Must bear it as they may ;
But since I’ve laid my burthen down,’
I ‘have a thing to say.’

“My trouble is past trouble now :
It has long lain with the dead.
My life is in its inner soul
No more disquieted.

“I own a lovely garden-ground :
The plants it grows are rare ;
And yet sometimes I almost wish
The flowers were not so fair.

“Were they thistles by the wayside blown,
I might pluck them and be glad ;
But, gazing on these tender things,
Their beauty makes me sad.

" Though free as fair in others' sight,
To me they bring the hour
When in my dearth I was denied
The gathering of a flower.

" The dearth of love, the dearth of hope,
Life's sweet and common bread ;
When the gracious sun seemed shrunk and lost
In the darkness overhead.

" I hear the cruel mandate now.
It shivers through the air ;
A blight upon the living flowers
I would were not so fair.

" I stretch my hand ; yet touch them not.
I cannot well define
How the force of old repression works :
I do not feel them mine.

" The breeze may sway, the sun may kiss,
The wind-flower by the wall :
I stand and watch it wistfully,
To see it fade and fall.

" I lift it then, my own at last,
And hide it in my breast ;
And there one dead-born blessing more
Is buried with the rest.

" But I forget, in musing thus
On that old distant day,
The word of counsel I would speak,
The ' thing I have to say.'

“ It is but this : oh ! ne’er deny
 The gifts which Mercy gave,
 Lest a voice that is not loud but deep
 Should curse you in your grave.

“ For I believe, as here I breathe,
 With every flower downtrod,
 The sin and sorrow of that time
 Are crying up to God.”



THE WORLD OF LOVE.

WHERE low the sun's last beams were shed,
Watching the sinking day,
A tender sadness, earthly bred,
Fell on me as I lay.

The white, white moon went following fast
To steal to his embrace :
His parting smile upon her cast
Had brightened all her face.

So, constant still, I marked them move ;
My soul meanwhile construing
How he was like to mortal Love,
And she like Death pursuing.

I slept—and woke. O wondrous world !
Mine eyes were eastward turned.
The cold moon waned with wings half furled :
The skies with glory burned.

“ Pale shape,” I cried, “ thy regal brow
Ruled this benighted strand :
But, O my soul ! how fares it now
In yon blest morning land ? ”

I gazed, and saw. The broad sun rose
With radiance crowned and belted :
The white, white moon, like scattered snows,
Into the shadows melted.

Then first I learned what name to give
That world beyond the sky :
God's heaven, where only Love can live,
And only Death can die.



THE HIGHLAND LOVER.

"Up, up, weannie Jean!" quoth my mither to me,
 "The burnie glints brightly, an' green is the tree.
 Ilka lass 'll be prankit fu' fairly the morn
 An' the May-dancers fit it aroun' the white thorn.
 Hie awa wi' your jo; pu' your May i' the flower;
 Gray haffets come fast when the springtime is owre."

But e'en as she speakit, my tears 'gan to drap
 Like the driftin' o' snaws i' the mid-winter's lap;
 An' out spak my puir heart, sae bruisit an' sair,
 "Oh, ne'er to his Jean shall my Donald come mair!
 For the eagle is screamin', that swoops owre the fa',
 Where their lane by Loch Kett'rin his banes waste awa.

"Hout, hout, weannie Jean!" quoth my mither and
 mair,
 "The simmer comes quickly when birds 'gin to pair.
 New luv is as guid as the luv that is auld,
 An' warm luv is better than luv that is cauld.
 Gude sauf the puir lass wha, when leaf-fa'in's near,
 Has nae bairns to cling roun' her, nae guidman to
 cheer!"

Wae, wae was my saul! I no answered again,
 But I thought—I'll hae Donald, dead lover, or nane.

Nae bairns shall cling roun' me, nae guidman shall cheer,
Sin' my heart wi' my Donald lies cauld on his bier.
For the North wind is soughin', an' wild will it blaw,
Where their lane by Loch Kett'rin his banes waste awa.

“What is't wi' your Highlands, that better they be?
The lads o' the Lowlands are lissom to see.—
A murrain be on him, his cattle an' men,
An' curst be the hour when he strode doun the glen!
An' wae for your young days, an' wae—wae is me,
Sin' he witched ye for aye wi' ae blink o' his ee!”

“Haud, haud awhile, mither!—it winna be lang.
Nae blessin' will bring him, nae cursin' can wrang.
I'll awa to the hills where we wandered thegither,
An' bury my face i' the bloom o' the heather.
For the water is churmin', an' loud does it ca',
Where their lane by Loch Kett'rin his banes waste awa.”



WHERE THE ROSES CLIMB.

DROPPED away! We may not hold them :
 Mightier arms than ours enfold them.
 Dropped away! Like morning mist
 Jealous suns have called and kissed.

Love is deep!

Throbbing pulse and burning tear
 Shall the dulled sense feel or hear,
 Starting up from deathly bier?

Let them sleep!

Let them be! Enough of pain :
 Drop the dusk pall down again.
 Lift no more from ashen cheek
 The veil, and lips that cannot speak.

Love is deep!

Do we call the swallow back?
 Love's the ship the ice-berg's track?
 Stretch them not upon the rack:

Let them sleep!

Let them slumber! Here no more
 Passion with its torrent-roar
 Sweeps the stranded heart away
 In its full rush, till all is clay.

Love is deep!

Now that billows' war is waged ;
Now the waters are assuaged :
Peace walks the world where seas have raged.
Let them sleep !

We who mourn them gone before,
We shall wait upon the shore,
Till yon Pilot, hailed again,
Steers us o'er the self-same main.
Love is deep !

Prayer shall watch them on her knees ;
Hope shall follow like a breeze :
Love shall melt, though Death may freeze—
Let them sleep !

Make in the wide earth space for two :
Both were loving ; one was true.
Lay them not asunder now
For the frown upon their brow.
Love is deep !

Severed were they in their prime,
Not by distance ; not by time :
Plant them where the roses climb !
Let them sleep !



THE WOODLAND FLOWER.

To his son a grey-haired monarch cried,
"Thou art young and I am old ;
Since my coffers lack of riches,
Go thou forth and win me gold.

"Bring me pearls from Oman's waters,
Bring me gold of Ophir pure,
Bring me adamantine jewels
That shall dazzle and endure."

With his father's blessing round him,
Rose the youth from bended knee,
And through the world's wide wilderness
A gallant soul went he.

The sun had run its heavy race
A year but and a day,
When back the youth rejoicing came
Bearing a flower of May :

A blossom from the woodlands torn,
A bride so fair to see,
With one young bud of beauty born
Unto the parent tree.

“Behold,” he cried, “the pearls I bring,
 Than Ophir’s gold more pure ;
 These more than adamantine gems
 Shall dazzle and endure.”

Then rose the father’s curse on high :
 “I curse you—curse ye all ;
 Your young bride shall my bondmaid be,
 Your child shall be my thrall.

“And go thou forth, a banished man,
 Out in the world’s rough ways,
 And anguish measure out thy years,
 And sorrow count thy days.”

Now, sonless sat the sire alone.
 It was a dreary thing,
 The silence and the misery
 That fell upon the king.

The harps were hushed : one only sound
 That silence broke for him,
 A tender chord of heavenly song,
 A simple household hymn.

The bowers grew wild : neglected now,
 The royal rose would fail ;
 But duly still his throne was wreathed
 With lilies of the vale.

While gentle lips that sang to him,
 And hands that bore him flowers,
 Showed never how the heart beneath
 Went sighing through the hours.

That blossom from the woodlands torn
Made sweet his palace halls :
So bright was she, she seemed to hide
The shadows on the walls.

Only, ever as a new day dawned,
Her constant eyes she rolled
From the babe of love upon her breast
Over the distant wold.

Till, as the years drew softly on,
And as the child grew fair,
He heard one morn his kingly name
Low breathing in a prayer.

Then swelled his bursting heart with pain,
Which saved him while it stung ;
And down across the marble floors
His throbbing brows he flung.

“Call, call him back, my loyal son,
Call, call him back !” he cried,
“And say his father’s blessing lights
On him and on his bride.

“And this, the child of his young love,
Shall bear my blessing, too,
For the prayer upon those infant lips
Hath pierced me through and through,

“I will no pearls from Oman’s waves,
No gold of Ophir pure ;
I ask no adamantine gems
To dazzle and endure,

“ While here, to cheer my lonely throne,
This woodland blossom sweet
Breathes gladness round, and through her woe
Comes singing to my feet.—

“ Come back, come back, and be my son
As thou wert wont to be,
Ere greed of riches iced the heart
That could not melt to thee!

“ Come back, come back ! What wealth can glad
My days, if we two part,
My son, my son ! who showered on me
The riches of the heart ?”



‘VELOCES HORÆ.’

I SEE the old Spring-haunted ground,
 By cedars flanked, with hillocks round.
 From crest to crest the joyous hours
 Dance on the sunlight till it flowers.
 With gold encrowned, yet humbly sweet,
 Peach-breathing gorses kiss my feet.
 The surge of winds through tossing trees
 Takes the soft roar of shoreward seas.
 Alive, the chasing shadows pass
 The lark's light spur along the grass.
 Roused to what glory round him lies,
 The cuckoo shouts his quaint surprise.
 Earth's new-born soul of lost delight
 By heaven's own hand is robed and dight:
 The lifted clouds grow arched with light,
 The cedars plume before my sight.
 Life's sympathetic music weaves
 A chain of song through all the leaves.
 To that rare strain 'twixt heaven and earth
 Which heralds here the eternal birth
 Some wild bird, singing on its spray,
 Rocks in the dim woods far away.—
 So, constant Spring shall come and go:
 She never knew, shall never know,
 How swift were slain, how martyred flew,
 The years that died to prove her true.

THE GRAVE OF MERCY.

THERE is a tomb on Moslem ground,
 A single, low, sepulchral mound,
 Which Time from ruin keeps ;
 And old men say in that still place,
 The last and noblest of his race,
 An Abencerrage sleeps.

By his command who there lies lone
 A cup was grooved within the stone,
 And there the rain-drops fell ;
 And oft when burning sunbeams sank,
 The wearied birds of heaven drank
 From that funereal well.

Refreshed, as by a desert spring,
 Then would each voice to Allah sing,
 Filling with joy the air ;
 While thus each early note and late
 Ascended up to heaven's gate,
 And pleaded like a prayer !

It is a dream, by fancy traced,
 That as those grateful creatures waste
 The hallowed drops away,
 Dim on the Angel's tablets grow
 The sins of him who sleeps below ;
 For Moslem maidens say,

That oft when gentle dews have rained,
Ere yet the birds of heaven have drained
The funeral chalice dry,
Redeemed from Azrael* and the grave,
Reflected in the Mercy-wave,
They see his face on high !

* The Angel of Death.



BATHILDA.

THERE is a dim old tale of beauty
 Told in the land of Gaul ;
 And the tender light of love and duty
 It streameth through it all.

To serve the good Mayor Archambaud,
 There stood a Saxon slave :
 Her looks so fair, her voice so low,
 Sweetened the cup she gave.

Cried he, " A lonely lot I rue ;
 My wife is laid in grave :
 Be thou my bride, in honour true,
 My lovely Saxon slave."

A tender sorrow in her face
 Spoke in the tear that fell :
 It said, " I may not fill her place
 Whom once I served so well."

With steadfast but averted look
 Back from the hall she turned ;
 And he whom, silent, she forsook
 Long years her absence mourned.

Where sad she wandered none may know ;
 Where passed her sainted life.
 At last the good Mayor Archambaud
 He took another wife.

When high in hall the feast was laid
Before the wedded pair,
Behold, the faithful Saxon maid
She stood beside his chair !

To that same feast, as Heaven would will,
There came King Clovis brave :
Who should the royal goblet fill,
Who but the Saxon slave ?

He gazed : and with a sudden start
The king the cup let fall.
There ran sweet music through his heart,
And silence through the hall.

Soon, low before the Saxon maid
Down bowed his soul of pride.
“ Wilt be my queen ? ” he softly said ;
And softly she replied :

“ Thou lov’st me with no common love ;
So, Clovis, let it be :
And help me, Heaven, as I shall prove
Help meet for France and thee ! ”

Low on the footsteps of her throne.
She vowed a vow of truth,
To crush the slavery that had thrown
Its blight upon her youth.

Right royally her vow she kept,
And strove with heart and hand ;
Nor rested, till her power had swept
That scourge from off the land.

When famine dogged the peasant's way,
And hunger watched his door,
Her jewelled robes she tore away,
And gave them to the poor.

When widowhood and sorrow came,
A cloistered cell she trod :
To France she left a deathless name ;
Her soul she gave to God.



THE SPIRIT'S ENIGMA.

HARK to the Spirit !

'I am the poet's day-dream : in the air
 Stirred by my wings the voice of genius speaks.
 I sat at mass with Petrarch, when he drew
 From Laura's eyes the fount of melody.
 I sped the sigh that rocked St. Anna's walls :
 Wrecked by the cruel world on madness' shore,
 'Twas Tasso's, mid the ruins of his lyre
 Drowning in music, like a sea-nymph's shell
 Upon Calypso's strand.'

Hark to the Spirit !

'No clime is free from me. I am the bliss
 Pictured so oft in old Arcadia ;
 The shaft which Psyche feathered, and the bolt
 That shook Olympus. By soft Helle's wave,
 I thrilled Leander upon Hero's lips.
 Pale Sappho at Leucadia wept to me :
 And, led o'er Latmos by her crescent's light,
 I stole with Dian on Endymion's rest.'

Hark to the Spirit !

'I am the crown of empires ; yet the curse
 Of kings, who cannot rear the flower they plant
 In the hot air of palaces. That power
 Was mine which called forth Inez from her tomb,
 And set her, livid, on the throne of Spain,
 And bade the princes of the land bow down

And pay her fealty. Mine, too, was the wail
That woke in old Jerusalem, where lay
The kingly Herod, Mariamne's lord :
'Twas I that watched her dust, when it was all
He saw who left it without soul on earth.'

Hark to the Spirit !

'I am the mate of Truth ; the strength of all
Who rule their hearts by a diviner law
Than consecrates a king. I was the light
That shone about the forehead of young Ruth,
Gilding the corn-blades which she bore ; the ray
Which pierced the night of Naomi, when the two
Would not be sundered. And, again, I streamed
Broad day into the judgment-court where stood
Firm Rachel by her lord, whose blanched lips cried
To them who offered him a stranger's help,
" My wife is here to do it ! " '

Hark to the Spirit !

'Where'er a dirge is heard, my name is breathed.
The cry of Eve came to me with the first
On whom the Shadow fell in Paradise.
I sat with Rizpah watching by her slain.
With David did I weep o'er Absalom.
And, last, where pierced the thorns on Calvary,
There knelt I with the " Woman " at the Cross.'



BIRDALANE.*

I.

NAE kin have I, nae hame, nae gear,
 Nae lovin' sire, nae mither dear,
 Nae brither in my sports to share,
 Nae sister fond to braid my hair;
 Ever my tears pour down amain,
 An' aye they ca' me Birdalane!

II.

I had a hame fu' braw and fair,
 A sister ance to braid my hair,
 A mither dear to soothe my wae,
 A brither young wi' me to play;
 I had a sire that now hae nane,
 An' aye they ca' me Birdalane!

III.

Ae morn I stood the sea beside,
 I saw a ship come ower the tide;
 That morn I tined them ane and a',
 I mourned and gar'd the tear down-fa';
 But wha for me shall mak' the mane,
 Or wha shall weep for Birdalane?

* A life-incident. The child—she was but thirteen—lost all her family by wreck on the North Coast, on their return from the West Indies. Gifts they brought her were found strewn along the shore. *Birdalane*, or *Burd-alane*, means one who has survived all ties.

SUN-RAYS.

I.

THE rising sun, with radiant finger raised,
Points to his realms above,
To guide a world benighted and amazed ;
For there stand God and love.

II.

At noon, up-mounted to his lordliest height,
Full in his noble prime,
The sun sends down his ladders of the light ;
And yet no thought will climb.

III.

Wearied at length, his fiery wrath is hurled
Red on the evening sky ;
Till every cloud is blushing for a world
That will not look on high.



HAUNTING SPIRITS.

It was an olden fancy, born
 Of some delirium of the brain,
 That parted spirits stray forlorn
 Back to our earth again.
 O fiction false !—O idle creed !
 Theirs is the rest, and ours the need.

They walk in glory, God their guide ;
 We haunt them, but they dream it not :
 Around their path our footsteps glide
 Whose fall they have forgot.
 The arch that spans their heavenly spheres
 Is but the rainbow from our tears.

Thou who didst leave me in thy youth,
 They say thou comest back to me,
 A phantom shape of love and truth
 The gifted eye may see :
 But well I deem this is not so,
 Where thou hast gone, 'tis mine to go.

If mortals do in sooth behold
 Such vision in my lonely land
 Whose desolation is untold,
 It must be that I stand
 With mine own spirit face to face,
 Which quits this form to fill thy place.

So, parted from my grosser self,
 'Tis easier to mount up to thee
O'er pine-topped crag, or rock-hewn shelf,
 Or stretch of the blank sea ;
And, soaring far from earth and night,
To follow to thy land of light.

And if I falter by the way
 To kiss the dust where thou hast been ;
Or if I weep—as well I may,
 Still dost thou walk serene,
Thy spirit-eyes, that look not back,
Fixed, mute, upon God's shining track.

In yonder fields His hand hath sown
 The beautiful doth stir thee still ;
Undreamed by thee, unfelt, unknown
 My quenchless human will :
Still wilt thou smile—and, smiling, pass,
Nor trace my shadow on the grass.

It may be that the soul of love
 Shall smite thee with a tender sense
Of one who in thy light doth move,
 Who may not yet go hence ;
And show thee, mid thine uncrushed flowers,
Light footprints such as once were ours.

So may I haunt thee—ay, till death
 Crowns all. The spirit flies before.
The grave but claims the conquered breath :
 Earth's empire is no more.
The soul of truth, unbarred by clay,
Leaps to the everlasting day !

"IN vain ! Thy sunny fields are far away,
And those blue vaults that echoed to thy lay
For ever closed from thee ;
In vain—since never more the lightsome air
Upon its chartered breath thy wings shall bear—
Thy struggle to be free !

"Thou whose wide reign was o'er the flowers unblown,
Thy realm is now a span, and all thy throne
One hillock of green mould !
Not thine that kindly earth where sheltered lay
Thy tender fledglings from the eye of day,
Soft in its grassy fold.

"Shut out from heaven, confined to duties low,
Tossed by a restless spirit to and fro,
Like thee our wings we beat ;
Our hopes, like thine, in fickle skies are shrined ;
Or, turn we to this earth, like thee we find

"Life's sunset and its gloom !"

Away, away to purer fields it flies,
Where tells no blossom, while it bleeding dies,
 Of battle's cruel story ;
Where life's true heroes, waking from their rest,
Shall view this earth, as suns the reddened West
 From whence they passed in glory.

The weary strife, the beating of the bars,
The torn limbs trailing 'neath the triumph-cars,
 The mockery and the moan,
What boots it all to him whose path lies where
Some conquering day his soul shall mount the air
 Up to a golden throne ?



THE GOLDEN BOAT.

Do you recollect the day,
 Sister Annie, when I lay
 In your arms, the while you read to me that strange
 wild tale

Of the magic golden boat
 With the silver swans afloat
 That drew it soft to landward in the down-hushed gale?

Of the magic stranger knight
 That in beauty did alight
 On the yellow sands at even when the sun lay low,
 Who so wondrously did sing
 That the daughter of a king
 Sailed out with him bewildered where the red waves
 glow?

How she, the sister, faded
 Till all the land was shaded
 By the gloom of her sweet sorrow for the twin soul gone;
 Till, with the drift-weed strown,
 To shore a corse was thrown
 In the silence and the shiver of the cold grey dawn?

How she rose up like the morning
 In its tenderest adorning
 And cast her breathing beauty where her twin lay dead:
 Till Nature great and holy
 Outdid the magic wholly,
 And mingling with the ocean mists the Pale King fled?

All that wondrous tale has lain,
Sister Annie, on my brain
Through the weary tossing fever when my pain lay deep ;
For I dreamed I was his wife
As I slumbered out my life,
And I thought I heard him singing o'er my last long sleep.

Was it nothing more than seeming ?
Sister Annie, was I dreaming ?
Did he love me ? Did I follow o'er the red sea line ?
Or was it but a vision
Sent by fiends in their derision
Who heard the angels weeping o'er a love like mine ?

Where is gone the golden boat
With the silver swans afloat ?
And where the knight—a shadow—that the pale sands
trod ?
Like the captive lark I tended
He is flown, and all is ended.
And is there nothing left me but a green grass sod ?

When the word was spoken never,
When he took the boat for ever,
When the waters overwhelmed me, only you left near,
What was it through my sleeping
But the potence of your weeping
That saved me, in the shedding of my long-hid tear ?

No more, no more of sighing.
Hear me, Annie, I am crying ;
And I feel it coming back to me, my long-lost rest.

Wild dreams no more beguiling,
See me, Annie, I am smiling
Like the wayward child I was, upon your one true
breast.

Is that the sun uprisen
From his dreary ocean prison?
He that rode the sea-horizon like a long gold boat,
The white-curved waves beside him
For silver swans to guide him—
But, hark! to heaven upspringing, sounds the lark's glad
note!

Lift me, Annie; let me hear it:
How bright the sun grows near it!
There! the barrier-cloud is riven like a strong tree cleft.
Now, the music and wing-lightness
Are both buried in the brightness,
And the greatness of the glory is the one thing left.



POOR HEART, BE STILL !

For Music.

BE still, be still, poor human heart !
 What fitful fever shakes thee now ?
 The earth's most precious things depart ;
 And what art thou ?
 Thy spring than earth's doth sooner fade ;
 Thy blossoms first with poison fill :
 To sorrow born, for suffering made,
 Poor heart, be still !

Thou lookest to the clouds ; they fleet.
 Thou turnest to the waves ; they falter.
 The flower which decks the shrine, though sweet,
 Dies on its altar.
 And thou, more changful than the cloud,
 More restless than the wandering rill,—
 Like that lone flower in silence bowed,
 Poor heart, be still !



SEA, EARTH, AND HEAVEN.

I.

LONG fathoms down beneath the deep,
To know how many corpses sweep
With streaming hair, each one alone,
By billow rocked or tempest strown,
 Tossing for ever ;
Where the land-breeze sounds no sigh,
Where the reddened corals lie
Upon whose summits peaked and high
 The doomed barks shiver ;
Oh, Sea ! it is a fearful thing !
I o see the birds above thee wing,
Yet know how many a hope is furled
That flew beyond thy watery world
 To the tropics glow :
Or, northward plumed, the storm defying,
Set once the outworn pinion plying
Towards some cold land where love undying
 Should melt the snow !

II.

To know, on every shore we tread,
That some to stranger graves are led,

And deem—poor joy ! the grass grows best
Where never loving foot has pressed

 In sorrow's crushing ;
By east, by west, far isles away,
To wist not where death next may lay
His icy touch, till none in the clay

 Hears the heart rushing :
Oh, Earth ! it is a thing of woe !
To feel sweet gales around thee blow,
Yet know that there be some who ne'er
Shall feel again that breathsome air,
 Joyful or sad ;

Ne'er mark again the hues that streak
Thy nighted brow or sun-bright cheek :
Dear Earth ! dear Earth ! the thought to speak
 Makes the heart mad !

III.

To know there is a land far off
Beyond the doubter's, scorner's, scoff,
Beyond what mortal thought can deem,
Beyond the region of all dream,
 Where not a pang
Shall wring the heart that maddens here ;
Where there are joys that ask no tear,
And sorrow's serpent ne'er shall rear
 Its poison-fang ;
O, Heaven ! it is a blessed thing !
To wait yon trumpet's summoning

where is not grave, nor storm, nor deep,
At God's own feet !



THE UNKNOWN PLEADER.

"The cause was to be tried before the Pope's Legate in the Bishop's palace at Paris. Thither they run of all sides. In this great and solemn assembly Philip's advocates pleaded wonderfully well for him against his wife, but no one appeared for her. As the crier had demanded three times if there were any one to speak for Gelberge, behold ! a young man unknown steps forth of the press, and demands audience. It was granted him with great attention. Philip assisting, every man's ears were open to hear this new advocate, but especially Philip's, who was touched and ravished with the free and plain discourse of truth which he heard from the mouth of this new advocate, so that they might perceive him to change countenance. After this young man had ended his discourse, he returns again into the press, and was never seen more, neither could they learn what he was, who sent him, or whence he came. The judges were amazed, and the cause was remitted to the council. Philip, without any stay in court, rides presently to the Bois de Vincennes, whither he had confined Gelberge. Having embraced her, he receives her again into favour, and passed the rest of his days with her in nuptial love."—*De Serres*.

I.

AN ancient page before me lies,
 Dark with the blood of kings.
 Through the red mist my spirit tries
 To pierce to nobler things :
 And one strange tale across my eyes
 A ray of glory flings.

King Philip of his wedded dame
Grew tired, as kings will do ;
Though not a breath had dimmed her fame,
A woman tried and true,
Whose gentle love was less a flame
Than a heart-freshening dew.

Far in the wood of old Vincennes
Her damsels round her sing ;
When tidings strange the tongues of men
Of courtly trial bring.—
Wild speeds the news to Marie, then,
The chosen of the king.

Through palace ways she wanders not,
Her voice has silent grown.
Her young life's page has not a blot
Save where her tears are strown :
And angels might have kissed the spot
Where Marie knelt alone.

Her quiet lips by God were made
To breathe life's purer air.
If now her pale brow owned a shade,
'Twas but a shade of care.
And ever down her shoulder strayed
One lock of golden hair.

The pitying soul within her wrought.
Such news could bode but ill.
With deep resolve her mind was fraught,
Though Marie looked so still :
And Marie's was a woman's thought,
That leaps to its sweet will.

Now kings are born for regal rule,
And women made for sport.
And love is but the poor Court Fool
That apes the monarch's port.
So Philip kneels by Marie's stool,
And bids her to the court.

A moment's flush her heart betrayed,
To hear him mount the stair.
But when his fingers would have played
With that strayed lock of hair,
Quick the unsanctioned hand she stayed ;
Then smiled : " I *will* be there."

II.

Stern Justice holds her court of doom ;
But Justice bound and blind.
A stricken bird with broken plume
Is hunted down the wind.
And flowers that round an altar bloom,
Are Rome's to loose or bind.

Will no blest hand the wrong dispute ?
Thrice has the trumpet blown.
Yet still stands Justice throned and mute,
As though her ears were stone.
When, like a green tree strong of root,
A youth stands forth, alone.

His words the rising triumph drown.

* So calm, he scorns defeat.

They know that 'neath that Pleader's gown

The quickening pulse will beat,

Till the dropped pearl of Philip's crown

Is lifted from his feet!

Through the hushed crowd, now touched with ruth,

A wondering murmur ran :

"Is this the angel of our youth

That stands 'twixt God and man ;

Woman, who pleads for woman's truth,

As only woman can !"

One thrilling heart-appeal—the first,

It made the wide hall ring.

It showed Rome's power a thing accurst :

It touched the nobler string.—

As one wild sob from Philip burst,

They looked upon the king!

Swift, in that moment's wild amaze,

A light mute step has flown

Where out amid the starlight ways

The eyes of heaven shone.

Beneath their everlasting rays

The Pleader stands alone.

The secret the firm soul conceals

And guards with jealous care,

The trembling of the stars reveals,

And the low wandering air.

For, streaming from its bondage steals

One lock of golden hair!

Slain love, though beautiful as rare,
Gains glory by its loss :
As ore beneath the furnace glare
Glow through its scattered dross.
Witness that lock of strayed gold hair
Bowed o'er a broken cross.

Alone with Heaven, alone at last,
Beneath her feet she trod
The bonds around her young heart cast ;
Nor wept above the sod.
For peace to Marie's spirit passed,
Alone with truth and God.

III.

That shaft flew true. It served love's need.
Full home the arrow hit.
He called his horse of Arab breed,
Which kings alone might sit :
The fleetest and the wildest steed
That ever champed the bit.

That loud hoof-clang, on mercy bent,
Rang past the homes of men :
Through coppice shades an echo sent
Which roused the startled wren ;
And pauseless reached, with speed unspent,
The wood of old Vincennes.

For Queen Gelberge in forest dells
Springs up the healing balm.
The soft surprise her bosom swells
Sinks to a holy calm :
And her heart's throb is drowned by bells
That peal from Nôtre Dame.

Above them rides the royal sun.
No shadow falls between.
A throne was staked. The game is done.
And blindly will she lean
On that worn heart pale Marie won
Ere yet she moved, a queen.

The crowns of kings, whose gems stream down
To light the historic scroll,
Share the brief life of earth's renown,
And in the dust they roll.
But Marie sought a nobler crown,
And won it for her soul.



VICTORY: ALMA.

IN the shelter of our harvest lands, amid our harvest
 sheaves,
 There spread a thrilling whisper through the rustle of the
 leaves:
 "The hour is born, the peril grows, the drums of war
 must beat;
 The sleeping Glory of the land has started to her feet."

Oh! brother-band of heroes, England's bravest, bravely
 led,
 Our spirits faint within us as they follow where ye tread.
 To every lip one question springs; one shuddering cry
 rings round:
 "Whose sword is yet within his grasp?—Whose face is
 to the ground?"

Let men proclaim the victory. We have no voice for
 more
 Who watch from far the tempest's wrack, safe housed
 upon the shore.
 Like those who breathe the mountain's breath, throned
 on its starry peak,
 Our lifted souls stand thrilled and mute;—we gasp, but
 cannot speak.

Of sweet life, within the furrow who has dropped the golden grain?—

What greeting shall await them who return to us again?

Our straining eyes will know them not, too dazzled when they come;

And our lips will sound no welcome, for the joy that strikes us dumb.

Bring back to us no trophies won, lest we should count the cost:

Bring back to us—alas! the word, it knells what we have lost.

Bring back and plant the laurel on the soil where best it flowers:

Bring back the dauntless hearts ye bore—we claim them—
—they are ours.



THE TRUE AMAZON.

The widow of that Colonel Moore, who, in order to insure the safety of the women and children, so heroically met his death, surrounded by his men, in the transport-ship "Europa," went out as a hospital nurse to the Crimea, where she died.

THOU art gone—but not to battle ;
 Thou hast fallen not by the sword ;
 Not beneath the cannon's rattle,
 Was my hero's blood outpoured.

Forlorn the hope that swayed thee
 On the bitter, bitter main ;
 Yet blessed be God, who laid thee
 In His deep, without a stain !

Oh, days for ever parted,
 Oh, time with sorrow rife,
 They need be lion-hearted
 Who wage this war of life !

There are sounding in this heart
 Old chords still true to thee :
 We are far—yet not apart ;
 Thou art dead—but not to me.

God's blessing on the brave !
 They who scorn a world of beauty ;
 They who march unto a grave
 In the heavenly light of duty !

Thine was the strength undying,
The might that rules the world ;
And shall I stand weakly sighing
When its banners are unfurled ?

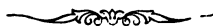
When I hear yon war-array
I may not see for tears,
I would it were the death-fray,
And I amidst the spears.

I pray the hours speed faster ;
I am weary of the sun ;
But, O World, thou art my master,
And thy work it must be done !

Not in anguish unavailing
Let me sink, while I can raise
The wounded and the failing
To the hope of other days.

Let me still the widow's weeping,
Let me lift the orphan's head,
A tireless vigil keeping
In memory of my dead.

So, with those who know no morrow,
In my darkness let me stand,
And drown this mighty sorrow
In the tears of all my land.



AFTER THE BATTLE.

INKERMANN.

THE drums are all muffled ; the bugles are still ;
 There's a pause in the valley, a halt on the hill ;
 And the bearers of standards swerve back with a thrill
 Where sheaves of the dead bar the way ;
 For a great field is reaped, heaven's garnerers to fill,
 And stern Death holds his harvest to-day.

There's a voice on the winds like a spirit's low cry :
 'Tis the muster-roll sounding—and who shall reply ?
 Not those whose wan faces glare white to the sky,
 With eyes fixed so steadfast and dimly ;
 As they wait that last trump which they may not defy,
 Whose hands clutch the sword-hilt so grimly.

The brave heads, late lifted, are solemnly bowed,
 And the riderless chargers stand quivering and cowed,
 As the burial requiem is chanted aloud,
 The groans of the death-stricken drowning ;
 While Victory looks on, like a queen, pale and proud,
 Who awaits till the morrow her crowning.

There is no mocking blazon, as clay sinks to clay ;
 The vain pomps of the peace-time are all swept away

In the terrible face of the dread battle-day :

Nor coffins nor shroudings are here ;
Only relics that lay where the thickest the fray,
A rent casque and a headless spear.

Far away, tramp on tramp, peals the march of the foe
Like a storm-wind's recoiling—spent, fitful, and slow,
With sounds, like their spirits, that faint as they go
By yon red-flowing river, whose waters*
Shall darken with sorrow the land where they flow
To the eyes of her desolate daughters.

Where the wreck of our legions lay stranded and lorn,
They stole on our ranks in the mists of the morn.
Like the giant's of Gaza, their strength it was shorn
Ere those mists had rolled up to the sky :
From the flash of our steel a new daybreak seemed born
As we sprang up, to conquer or die.

The tumult is silenced : the death-lots are cast ;
And the heroes of battle are slumbering their last.
Do ye dream of yon Pale Form that rode on the blast ?
Would ye face it once more, O ye brave ?
Yes ! the broad road to Honour is red where ye passed,
And of Glory ye asked but—a grave !

* The Tchernaya.



THE RETURN OF THE GUARDS.

BACK they come, like waves retreating
Where the storm no more is beating ;
Hungry hope no longer cheating,
Back they come !
Soldiers, to your native sod,
Patriots, where your fathers trod,
Heroes, to each household god,
Welcome home !

Women are we, meek and lowly,
Striving upward, firmly, slowly :
To our bosoms true and holy
Back they come !
Let no lagging steps defeat them ;
Rise we and go forth to meet them,
Whispering as we fondly greet them,
Welcome home !

Noon we clouded with our weeping ;
Midnight, kept we watch unsleeping.
Once more to our spirits keeping
Back they come !
Barren spring was vain to cheer us ;
Now it blossoms as they near us.
Let us cry until they hear us,
Welcome home !

Proudly to our hearths we'll bring them
Welcome home !

Who shall hear the serpent hissing ?
Who shall question of the missing ?
When unto their children's kissing
Back they come !

Of the lost they'll whisper low ;
" Thus spake Glory's self but now
As she kissed them on the brow,
' Welcome Home ! ' "



THE ANNIVERSARY OF INKERMANN.

'Twas the fifth of old November,
 I pray you, love, remember,
 The merry fires were glancing on the grey hillside ;
 When, spite of wind and weather,
 Far down among the heather,
 Midst the ferns and mountain gorses, you won me for
 your bride.

Now remember, love, remember,
 Ever since that old November,
 When the earth was lit with glory, and the heavens
 smiled above,
 We have vowed to keep it solely
 As a joy, to memory holy,
 And from an old dead custom draw a living fount of love.

Let us forth at Nature's summons
 To the wild, wood-skirted commons,
 There we'll kindle every withered bough that drops
 around our way ;
 With our children gathered round us,
 We will bless the fate that found us
 Down among the reddened gorses in the dying of the
 day.

And remember, love, remember,
When around each dying ember
We watch their glad young faces, bright with artless
mirth and fun,
What it is to feel the glow
Of the loving hearts we know
Will ne'er with life desert us till the dark day's done !

We may weep or we may smile,
Ay, do all things but revile;
We may rue the bitter louring of the cold world's frown;
But while simple pleasures please us,
Winter's self shall never freeze us;
We can wait with patient faces till the storm dies down.

Leave we the dear old door
For the heath and upland moor;
Let us tread them, love, together, while the ways seem
fair :
By-and-by the dimness, lameness,
When all things shall wear a sameness,
But to-day for hope and gladness, and for God's blest
air !

Let my willing arm sustain you :
Does your wound of battle pain you ?
Does the rugged pathway shake you ? So ; lean heavy
on my breast :
There is health and vigour coming
Where the swollen streams are humming,
And the lights of autumn playing on the wild bird's
crest !

THE MASSACRE AT CAWNPORE.

A LURID star is burning in the east :
 Not o'er a cradle, but a sepulchre.
 It cleaves the heavens like that fiery sign
 Which set of yore our Highland hills aflame
 When blood was in the wind. Plague-spotted land,
 The leprosies of old were white to thine !
 In this new slaughter of the innocents
 The Prince of Peace is crucified again.
 O women—martyred sisters ! we could weep
 But for hot shame which burns up all our tears.
 Our quivering lips are prayerless o'er your dust :
 We may not strew the desecrated sod
 Which fiends have trampled, with the flowers of heaven ;
 But, fierce in the strong passion of the weak,
 Yet helpless as the babes upon your breasts,
 We fold our white robes round us with a vow
 Unto the God of battles !—Lisping babes !
 O world, O world ! could not those mother-hands
 Pluck down the wrathful heavens on such deeds ?
 The innocent lotus on the unstirred waves,
 The pale, pure crescent in the warless heavens,
 Smile in each other's faces. What is man
 That he should warp the beautiful to wrong,
 Turning God's gifts unto ignoble use ?
 Were these the fitting symbols for a curse ;
 The direst, most profound ; the curse of war ?
 There was a time—methinks 'tis but a tale—

When bread and salt, partaken brotherly,
Once signed 'twixt fellest foes a bond and pledge,
The freedom of the city of the heart !
Yet these were of our house, our home, our hearth,
Embosomed in our trust ; before whose eyes
Our weakness was paraded and unmasked.
O Pariah of nations, hide thy head !
Alien thou art, and alien shalt thou be,
Thou and thy races, from all men whose pulse
Beats to the music of a noble nature !
Say, had ye wrongs ?—Ye have undone your cause.
By your own crimes self-branded, do ye fall ;
While we stand righted in your depths of shame.
The seed accursed brings forth a millionfold :
Behold the fruit ! Why we, even we, who once
Would snatch the snared bird from the fowler's clutch,
Now point to yon red star, and cry—" Go forth !
White-headed fathers, stint not your grey hairs !
Brothers ! let not your might of manhood sleep.
Lovers and husbands !—lo, the star is red
With too much looking on red Indian plains,
With too long burning over martyr-graves,
With too deep blushing over woman-wrongs ;
Go forth ! Till that foul stain be branded out,
We look no more on you—but on the star.
Our sickening eyes shall track it, till that day
When ye shall stand amidst the ransomed souls
Who cry to ye for succour ; till again
The sword shall know its place in the scorned sheath ;
Till horror's shriek is silenced, and once more
The fiery symbol shall be blotted out,
And the red star stand white before its God !"

SAVED FROM THE MUTINY.

A WOMAN, a mother, an outcast forlorn,
 I met on the world's highway :
 Her touch was pollution, her name was a scorn,
 She, a waif on life's ocean astray.
 I paid her such tribute as suffering can wring,
 A pitiful trifle—no more :
 Then I crossed the bridge of a water-spring,
 And I passed to another shore.
 But her voice came over the river :
 “The Lord remember the giver, lady!—The Lord
 remember the giver!”
 I turned to my home, where a fountain played,
 To the sweetness of love without shame,
 Where, with steps like the pattering fall it made,
 My little life-angels came ;
 Came bounding to meet me with kiss and with clasp,
 And with eyes of delight brimming o'er,
 Till I felt it was almost a burthen to grasp
 The weight of the joy that I bore.
 And my soul cried over the river :
 “Lord, let me remember the Giver!—Lord, let me
 remember the Giver!”
 For across the river, beyond the Ghauts,
 My husband, my lover, was far ;
 There was blood on its waters, and keen through my
 thoughts
 Pierced the barb of the arrow of war.

Oh! what if his foot should be caught in the snare?
Oh! what if he never comes more,
And I bury my face in his vacant chair,
And wait, wait in vain, for his step on the floor?
Then my shriek rang over the river:
“Lord, let me remember the Giver!—Lord, let me
remember the Giver!”

Glad tidings flew swiftly! Wrenched out from the
hand
Fell the sword that was raised to destroy;
And over the waters and over the land
Flowed a wave and a ripple of joy.
In his jungle the tiger was tamed and defied;
The slayer of babes sprang no more:
The last breath of war on the mountains had died;
Died, the peace of the soul to restore.
And together we stood by the river:
And we two remembered the Giver, Lord!—We two
remembered the Giver!

For the smiles of these little ones safe in our arms,
Be our thankfulness heartfelt and deep;
For the home, where the music of victory charms
Dread dreams from their innocent sleep!
Till we carry them, stainless, where war is unknown;
Till we clasp them to loose them no more,
Where Thou art the fountain of gladness alone;
Till we pass to the calmer shore,—
Till we cross the eternal river,
O! let us remember the Giver!—Lord, let us remember
the Giver!

THE PATRIOT'S LAST SONG.

My voice is faint with crowding years ;

Yet would I sing one parting song.

Say, shall it be a thing of tears ?

Or fitting more the courage strong
Of one whose soul, though sick with strife,
Draws music from the chords of life ?

A song of joy ?—Nay, joy has fled.

A song of love ?—Alas ! Alas !

The hours are gone, the days are dead

That would have let that fiction pass :
For faith too soon proved rebel-hearted,
And love and life have long since parted.

Of empires ?—'Tis a theme too stale.

Of battle ? No, my blood is cold.

The first is but a huxter's tale

Of acres bought and chattels sold :
'The last is but the coinage poor
Which makes such bargains swift and sure.

My native land ?—My native land !

Ha ! throbs my pulse to breathe thy name ?
This crown of earth whereon I stand,

Unbought, unsold, is still the same :
Alone by circling seas enchained ;
Undaunted, calm, and self-sustained.

When thrones wax old, when time grows grey,
Though I shall welcome never more
Those happy waves which day by day
Come wandering home to kiss thy shore,
Back, still, their lifted crests shall flee
To tell the nations—thou art free !

The bloom of youth might fade or fly
While o'er my heart cold sorrow stole :
The love I bore thee could not die,
But grew to passion in my soul.
Thou wert the source whence still I drew
One wish—one hope—forlornly true.

Though never more, by freedom blest,
This hand shall sweep the patriot strings :—
What then ?—Enough that o'er my rest
One sod of thine its greenness flings.
'Tis something still, when all is done,
That thou and I, at least, are one.



THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH.

'Twas night ; perchance the shadows deep my wondering
sense beguiled :

Methought, amid the firelight gleams, like to a soul-clad
child,

A gentle spirit rose and stood before my face and smiled.

Its lambent eyes had all the glow of life's first spring-like
tide ;

And thus I knew, full surely knew, though long ago it
died,

I and my buried youth were standing friendly side by
side.

No grace was gone, no touch of time had dimmed the
fearless glance ;

The tireless footstep swept the floor like to a floating
dance ;

And I felt the clear, shrill, flute-like voice strike through
me as a lance,

Yet, but for one soft, fitful touch of pain all sudden
thrown

From brow and eye to tender lip, like cloud on sunlit
down,

So glad this soul of youth, I had not known it for my
own.

“Send forth,” it cried, “thy new-born grief to walk the
world with me,
Nor bind it captive to thy breast, a slave that would be
free ;
If but it followeth where I go, all shall be well with thee.

“Thou mad’st of me a sorrow once, when I was rath
and fair ;
Thou mak’st of me a sorrow now that whitens all thine
hair,
Because, deep-searching in thy heart, thou find’st I dwell
not there.

“My spirit is about thee still : thou callest, and I rise.
Despair shall conquer not while thou beneath these spirit
eyes
Walk pure the dark ways of the earth when all its day-
light dies.

“Thou saw’st me go in anguish once : I come once more
to trace
If yet thy heart may courage draw from looking on my
face ;
For sorrow on the front of youth it hath a strange dead
grace.

“I would have made a lovely life for thee, but all in
vain ;
And still I feel—a spirit now—the stirrings of thy pain.
I am the only grief of thine shall ever come again.

“Thy late-born woes have followed me, but all their tears
lie shed :
The grace of Heaven their sobbing stills ; and to a
restful bed
One after other forth they go with a most silent tread.”

The gentle spirit turned and stole with noiseless foot
away.
A sudden sunbeam cleaved the sky with a quick upward
ray.
The shadows passed from earth and heart, and once more
it was day.

So now amid the deepening glooms I sit and muse no
more ;
But set the captive sorrow free, and, throwing wide life's
door,
See it tread the quiet footsteps of the sorrows gone before.



DROWNED HOPE.

SILENT she floats with upward face,
Gone—she is dead and gone ;
Gone in her youth, dead in the grace
And beauty of her dawn.

She drifts with tender lips apart
That no reproach breathes through :
The gentle Sabine of the heart,
Death caught her ere she knew.

Loose on the waters streams her hair
Like grasses of the main :
Never those hands so deathly fair
Shall wind the knot again.

A haze no breath may waft aside
With shroud-like veil has crost
And fair enfolds, but cannot hide,
All we have loved and lost.

A little while and we shall mark
The waters hurrying past ;
And cry across the deepening dark,
And weep, and look our last.

A brief dull tide of heavy flow
Along the shores of night,
And down the rapids shall she go
For ever from our sight.

TEARS.

I.

WOULD some kind angel give me tears—
 It seems a little thing,
 A child's first need—I would not ask
 The gems that crown a king.

II.

The glad peace-bringers after storm
 Are drops the sun smiles through :
 The healer of the parching rose
 Is but a bead of dew.

III.

Yet what am I, an atom sole
 In Heaven's creative plan,
 That I should ask the tenderest gift
 God ever gave to man.



THE MOTHER'S SONG OF THE ROBIN.

Scotch Air.

Oh ! the robin, the robin.—

Be silent, my heart !

Cease, cease from your sobbin',

My heart, oh ! my heart.

Over the dropped rose the lilies will blow :

Through the sharp thorn the Great Sickle will go.

Time, Time, fly your fleetest !—

Oh ! poor little head.

Oh ! my sweetest, my sweetest,

My dead, oh ! my dead.

Where his voice is not ringing no music will ring :

Where his foot is not springing no blossom can spring.

Oh ! the robin, the robin.—

Be silent, my heart !

What use is your sobbin',

My heart, oh ! my heart ?

Turn, turn where you will turn, look round and look
round,

The soul of the summer is under the ground.

MY BUCKLER.

'Tis an old-fashioned buckler, unsullied, unworn,
That to me from the front of a battle was borne.

Of my last sword bereft,
It is all I have left.

I cherish it proudly : I keep it from rust :
For all my brave kinsmen are down in the dust.

Though not wrought for me solely, it serves me full fair ;
Where my fight was the thickest, it guarded me there.

No foul hand shall stain it :
Not a breath shall profane it.

For the tomb of my fathers I hold it in trust :
For all my brave kinsmen are down in the dust.

If ever we meet in the land of the true,
They will know of what battles I carried it through.

So I bear it, my land !
Till it drops from my hand ;

As they bore it whom death from the vanward has thrust :
For all my brave kinsmen are down in the dust.



WEEP NOT, GRIEVE NOT.*Air: Beethoven.*

**WEEP not, grieve not ! Calm she sleepeth ;
 Grieveth, weepeth
 Now no more.**

**Stilled that torn heart, resting never ;
 Stilled for ever :
 All is o'er.**

**Robe her whitely, pure as sorrow found her :
 Softly, lightly, wind the lilies round her.
 Death has caught her, fainting, bleeding,
 Mercy needing,
 Bruised and sore.**

**Higher, shall she rest be finding,
 Tears unblinding
 Those poor eyes.
 Love shall greet her, gently dealing
 Words of healing
 Where she flies.**

**Whiter, fairer, streams her robe of whiteness :
 Brighter, rarer, gleams the lilies' brightness.
 Nought can more from peace divide her ;
 Grief beside her
 Droops and dies.**

THE UPLAND PATH.

Wise men, or such as to the world seem wise,
 Picture old age the downward path of Life,
 Dimmed by the vapours of a lower earth
 Drawn from its stagnant waters.

Nay, not so ;

But, rather, upward where the mountains stand
 Guarding the young green valleys, lies his way
 On whose broad front is set the crown of years.

Silent, and filled with beauty, shall he go,
 As one who travels towards the source of streams ;
 And, pondering thoughtfully, comes unaware
 On landlocked tarns, whose stilly waters keep
 The face of heaven in memory ! Far below,
 The maddening rivers keep the seas in chase,
 Till the vexed ocean beats the curbing shore ;
 And, striving still for mastery, the rough winds
 Grapple the yielding argosies. Not for him
 Sounds their wild roar amid his calm of skies.
 Save when, perchance, some shriek of human woe,
 Piercing the cloud that rolls beneath his feet,
 Touches the common nature in his heart,
 Unmoved he stands ; and, in a trance of soul,
 'Mid God-ward dreams, between the rifted peaks

I nough round him close the everlasting hills,
And darkness falls upon him as a shroud,
He casts his feeble frame on Nature's heart,
That beats to his again. Then, heavenward-bound,
Sets firm his foot upon the Path of Souls.

THE END.

A Blank Leaf.



“SCATTER not barren to the winds of heaven
One leaf whereon God’s glory may be writ.”

So spoke the Moslem sage. Is it then fit
That we stand mute to whom the Word is given?
A single tone may wake an angel tune,
A breath may waft some spirit to the skies.

As wave-grown willows, where blest waters rise
Cooling the parched earth mid the heats of June,
Down-drop their leaves upon the traveller’s way
That he, beholding, may proclaim the stream
To those athirst; even so my soul could deem
This chance-borne leaf, white with a seraph ray,
Dropped sudden down upon my path, that I
To God’s unfailing fount of love might testify.







